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MELIOR
PERO
Ivan: Panton,

A
(Bolingbroke)
Hunter

TRANSFER FROM LENOX.

(Bolingbroke)

AN

A

SKETCH

OF THE

Philoſophical Character

OF THE LATE

LORD VISCOUNT

BOLINGBROKE.

A fairer Spirit loſt not Heaven, he ſeem'd
For dignity compos'd, and high exploit:
But all was falſe and hollow, though his tongue
Dropt Manna, and could make the worſe appear
The better reaſon, to perplex and daſh
Matureſt counſels: For his thoughts were low,
To vice induſtrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and ſlothful: Yet he pleas'd the ear.

MILTON.

By THOMAS HUNTER,
Vicar of WEVERHAM in CHESHIRE.

LONDON:
Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand.
MDCCLXX.

1770.

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

EDMUND,

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

MY LORD,

A Hermit of the foreſt preſents himſelf before You, and in one inſtance at leaſt adopts the mode and paſſion of the times---the aſſumed right of an Engliſhman to break in upon his betters, though he has no ſubject of complaint to prefer againſt your Lordſhip's adminiſtration:--- His ſhade is unviolated,---his

fountain is undiſturbed,---the limpid element ſparkles in his glaſs,---he imbibes the pure breath of heaven,---he finds his heart open to the bleſſings of Nature and ſenſible of the mercies of Providence, among which he accounts as not the leaſt his ſituation in a land diſtinguiſhed by its liberties and laws.---Yet if he is free and ſecure, he would not be rude or licentious---ſincere as he thinks himſelf, he will not be guilty of inſolence or preſumption:---he approaches not without permiſſion and the reſpect due to your Lordſhip's rank and character in life,---he has no favours to demand, no extravagancies

gancies to propoſe, nor grievances to publiſh to the world.

Juſtice rather requires him to acknowledge your Lordſhip's general humanity to the perſons, and attention to the intereſts of your inferior clergy, whoſe friend you declared yourſelf on the firſt public occaſion after your promotion to the See of Cheſter.--- A declaration which has been abundantly made good through a courſe of years, not only by your ſollicitude to augment their ſmall livings, but by the frequent and ſeaſonable relief adminiſtered to their perſonal wants and diſtreſſes. Gratitude particularly demands from the author of theſe ſheets to teſtify your

Lordſhip's ſingular beneficence, which freely and unſollicited, except by the native pulſe of your own generous heart, honoured him with your early patronage, and aſſigned him his ſtation with peace and independance.

Here engaged on your Lordſhip's portrait, he could dwell with pleaſure as on a favourite piece, could expatiate on the open, the benign aſpect and ſerene affability of the man,---on the charity and moderation of the chriſtian,---on the politeneſs and ſocial complacency of the gentleman,---on the amicable hoſpitality of the neighbour,---on the vigilance, the candour and

and paternal affection of the prelate,---on the firmneſs, the loyalty and diſintereſtedneſs of the Briton, --- on learning without pedantry --- on piety without gloom or preciſeneſs---on high ſtation without pride---on dignity without pomp, and munificence without oſtentation:------ But here your Lordſhip forbids to indulge the pleaſing theme; and perhaps the plain and independant aſſertor of the cauſe of God ſhould avoid even the truth itſelf when it wears the leaſt appearance of art, adulation, or deſign to procure acceptance and favour with man.

But your Lordſhip's great and amiable qualities, and the author's

obligations apart---To whom more properly than to a father of the church, and a member of the moſt auguſt council of the nation, could theſe ſheets be addreſſed for countenance and protection, intended as they are to expoſe in a juſt light the character of an avowed and undiſſembled enemy both to church and ſtate, to his country and to mankind?

Such a conduct was the more inexcuſable in the noble philoſopher, as he profeſſed himſelf a patriot,---a friend to virtue and the intereſts of his country.--- The ſtateſman and the politician might poſſibly be a ſtranger to the

the peace, the power, the ſecurity, the elevation and grandeur, the happineſs and triumph of a devout heart;---but for the philoſopher, well acquainted as he was with the hiſtory and infirmities of human nature, to endeavour to eraſe the ſanctions of religion from the minds of men, was a more licentious proceeding, and a more abſurd and paradoxical attempt, than any of thoſe of the many fools and madmen whom he has ſo freely cenſured.

Was religion conſidered only as a perſonal bleſſing to individuals, fitted as it is to enlighten the dark, to ſupport the weak, to animate the timid, to raiſe the deſponding, to comfort the afflicted,

flicted, to relieve the miſerable, —to labour to deprive us, of this our ſupport and comfort in life and in death, was unkind and cruel, and an injury which every private man has a right to reſent, and if he is able, to repel: —But when we conſider religion in its more public and diffuſive influence, as moſt powerful to enforce the obligations of morality, and to impreſs the ſeveral orders and characters of men with the proper knowledge of the principles, and the moſt cogent motives to the practice of their duty, to reclaim the flagitious, to confirm the virtuous, to controul the proud, to repreſs the injurious, to reſtrain the licentious,

to

to ſoften the obſtinate, to diſarm the cruel, to abaſh the venal and corrupt, to awe the factious and turbulent, to enſure the loyalty of ſubjects to their prince, and the prince in the intereſts of his people, to promote the peace, to unite and confirm the ſtrength, and to increaſe the happineſs and grandeur of a ſtate, it ſeems a publick concern, and the duty and intereſt of the ſtate to reſtrain, if not to puniſh the inſulter and underminer of its laws, and the invader of its beſt ſupport and ſecurity.

—— For ſurely there is an obvious diſtinction in nature and reaſon, between liberty and libertiniſm,

tiniſm, between the modeſt and conſcientious enquirer after truth, and the wanton and outrageous propagator of immorality and impiety:—But let the legiſlature be ſilent, or the magiſtrate inactive on this occaſion, ſurely the aſſertor of the religion of his country has a title to candor, though he pretends not to fame or favour, and may challenge the merit of a good citizen and ſubject, though he affects not the reputation of a ſcholar and philoſopher.

Your Lordſhip, I am aſſured, will accept in good part this Eſſay, of one, who, as he is deprived of the ability and comfort of diſcharging

charging his public duty, has this only method left him to expreſs his love to his country and his God.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

moſt obliged,

moſt dutiful

and devoted ſervant,

THOMAS HUNTER.

PREFACE.

IF it be thought preſumption for a private perſon to attempt — to attack the philoſophic character of the lord viſcount Bolingbroke, it is replied:—That when Nobles commence Philoſophers, and publiſh their ſpeculations to the world, they put themſelves upon a level with the people, rank with other authors, and can rightfully claim no diſtinction, but what ſuperior virtue, wiſdom and force of argument give them.

Any further apology for the freedom taken with the character of the noble Philoſopher, the author makes not: — his conſcience and character as a Chriſtian and a ſervant of the moſt high God, not permitting him to diſguiſe or diſſemble the truth — to betray a ſervile fear, or pay a ſervile complaiſance to the perſons and principles of impious and unreaſonable

reaſonable men, by whatever titles dignified or diſtinguiſhed.

——And, reader, may not the fame of genius, and the ſplendor of title, prejudice thee in favour of the noble author: And may'ſt thou remember that the divine authority of the Goſpel was not leſs manifeſted, from its being publiſhed by the carpenter's ſon, and the fiſhermen of Galilee!

To beſpeak the reader's candor to the following piece, it may be proper to acquaint him, that the author has, for many years, been deprived of the benefit of ſight, and is with reluctance drawn from ſerenity and the ſhade, to the preſent publication, deſirous as he was, could he have prevailed with his friends, to ſteal through the world in ſilence, and that this, among the amuſements of his darkſome hours, ſhould have been buried in the ſame duſt with his laſt remains.

A

SKETCH

OF THE

PHILOSOPHIC CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

Lord Viſcount BOLINGBROKE.

SECTION I.

HAD a friend to lord Bolingbroke's perſon during his life, or a friend to his principles ſince his death, been to give us his portrait, they would probably have employed upon the ſubject the warmeſt and moſt glowing colours; and after all, held out the original to the world as a maſter-piece of nature, which mocked all the efforts of art: his

lordſhip certainly had, and ſtill has ſome fine features, and an air of greatneſs, which ſtrike even ſtrangers at firſt ſight with reſpect and awe: his humanity and politeneſs, joined to his other accompliſhments, might give a ſuperior charm to his converſation, raiſe him ſtill higher in the eſteem and admiration of thoſe living friends, his inferiors, to whom he thus graciouſly condeſcended, and preſent him to their partial views, as the moſt accompliſhed of mankind: party, which covers a multitude of ſins, and canonizes all characters, might, as it actually did, contribute to his fame:—but the preſent ſketch muſt repreſent the noble lord, in a very different light, to that in which he was beheld by the popular eye; as it reſpects the mere philoſopher, a name which he only aſſumed, but had never exhibited in that character during his life-time.

However, to avoid all objection, all cenſure, or ſuſpicion of prejudice and partiality on this ſubject, let us allow to his lordſhip all the merit and praiſe, which

which his admirers can juſtly demand to his genius and eloquence: Let no unworthy fear of danger, or hurt to the cauſe of religion, hinder us from giving the applauſe due to his diſtinguiſhed abilities, as a writer: let us do juſtice to truth for truth's ſake, wherever we find it, even in an enemy.

The ſhining parts, and diſtinguiſhed qualities of lord Bolingbroke, as a writer and an author, can, I think, be denied by no man, who has any tolerable taſte for genius, literature, wit, elegance and compoſition: and he who detracts from his lordſhip's character in theſe reſpects, does but ill conſult his own.—He ſeems to be one of thoſe wonders of nature, which make their appearance but once in the courſe of ſome centuries;—like a comet revolving after ſome hundred years, and aſtoniſhing the world with its rapidity, eccentric courſe, and ſuperior blaze to that of the fixed ſtars; whoſe uniform aſpect, regular ſtation, ſober ſeeming pace, and diminiſhed light afford us nothing either of novelty or amazement.

One art, or profeſſion, one ſcience, or even one branch of a ſcience has been found ſufficient, and frequently more than ſufficient for the faculties of one man: but in lord Bolingbroke you ſee one of a ſize above the common ſtandard, graſping at univerſal knowledge, and making a conſiderable figure in every branch of literature, ſacred and profane: His erudition, though neither deep nor exact, yet makes a great and a graceful figure: He may ſeem a citizen of every ſtate, a native of every country, familiar to every age, and acquainted with the policy, the philoſophy, the manners, the arts, and religion—in ſhort, with the learning and the learned of every nation under heaven: and he may be allowed the praiſe of a genius of no ordinary ſize, who, within the limits of human life, and notwithſtanding the avocations of buſineſs, and diſſipations of pleaſure, could ſo eaſily comprehend, and ſo elegantly exhibit to the world a ſpecimen of literature ſo various in kind, and ſo univerſal

verſal in its extent, however imperfect in its execution.

What diſtinguiſhes the noble author from moſt other men, who have appeared upon the ſtage of letters, is that commanding genius, which not confined by the ſphere of a particular profeſſion, ranged through all, and attempted univerſal ſcience. Hiſtory ancient and modern, profane and ſacred, polite and barbarous, opened to him her ample page. Manners, habits, laws and inſtitutes, the moſt ſtriking actions, examples, and characters the moſt illuſtrious and diſtinguiſhed in peace and in war, were familiar to his view, crowded upon his pen, and might ſeem to have been objects that exiſted yeſterday.—Nor was he a ſtranger to the broken monuments, and faded traditions of remoter ages. He ſaw enough of theſe, and of the comments of the Rabbies, and the legends of the Talmudiſts to deſpiſe them, and to deſpiſe thoſe who affect to build regular and complete ſyſtems on ſuch partial, hypothetical, and uncertain foundations.

Ancient philoſophy, and its ſeveral ſects, its profeſſors, their opinions and characters, its ſchools, their riſe, progreſs and decline, where they agreed, and where they differ from each other, and where they deviate ſometimes from their own original principles, as in the Platonic or Academic ſchool, are amply, familiarly and gracefully recited and commented upon, and with preciſion enough, except where exaggeration or paraphraſe, ſuggeſtion and conjecture are admitted, the better to ſerve his own hypotheſis, or to form an exacter parallel between ancient and modern doctors and doctrines. From the old, he ſteers with ſufficient ſkill and dexterity, through fathers, councils and ſchoolmen, to the new world of ſcience — to modern ſyſtems and diſcoveries;—where his obſervations on men and books —on things and characters that bore the higheſt name, and made the greateſt figure in theſe latter ages of ſcience, diſplay his extenſive genius to much advantage. He dwells not on generals only, like a ſtranger in the country,

country, nor gives you a map of the mere coaſts and bearings, but enters, as far as his prejudices would allow him, into the receſſes, the heights and depths of this philoſophic region. He talks like one at home, familiar with every face he meets, and with every place and character he mentions: Des Cartes, Malebranche, Bacon, Locke, and Newton ſeem domeſtic to him, familiar friends at his table, and companions in his cloſet.

He had a large and comprehenſive capacity, and a very ſtrong memory; and he would not loſe the credit of either; having exhibited to the world very diffuſely his great ſtock of materials, and let the reader ſee, that there was nothing in literature, ancient or modern, which he did not know, or thought not worth his while to know.

His reading was evidently extenſive; few amongſt mankind have had leiſure to take the ſame compaſs, and ſtill fewer the ability to retain and apply it ſo gracefully; ſome oſtentation there is in the diſplay of it, which the affectation of

quoting ſo much by memory cannot hide. Yet after all, we are agreeably entertained, as well as informed by his reading. His compaſs of thought was like that of his reading, large and comprehenſive; and on the account of both, a ſcholar is at leaſt obliged to him for that general chart of literature, which he has ſtruck out, and for the general characters and manners of authors, though greatly aggravated and miſrepreſented, in which a reader of a different turn may profit much.

He has compoſed more books, as Tully ſays of Pompey, that he had fought more battles, than others had read. Sometimes plunged in the rubbiſh of remote antiquity, he brings up into light traditions that are almoſt defaced by time, and long buried from common obſervation. In ſhort, he is a cabbaliſt, chronologer, critic, ſtateſman, patriot, politician and hiſtorian:—And on all theſe ſubjects he appears not like a ſtranger in a ſtrange land, ſhy, reſerved and aukward, and as one who under-

ſtands not the manners and language of the country; but as if always at home, he deſcants familiarly, and applies happily, both in honour of his wit, and ſpeciouſly in ſupport of his argument. He ſometimes enlarges plauſibly, and decides with ſufficient authority; and may ſeem a ſcholar of every ſect, a member of every council, and an infallible judge of every religious controverſy that had divided Chriſtendom. But it is peculiar to his lordſhip's honour, that from public life, from buſineſs, from pleaſure and the pomp of a court, and from ſtudies of the politer, more open and eaſy kind, he could ſo ſoon, and ſo much abſtract himſelf, as to enter into theſe airy ſpeculations and ſubtle diſquiſitions concerning ideas, modes, relations, &c. which may ſeem to have no exiſtence, to make no figure, and to challenge no regard out of the walls of a ſchool or a college. Nay, he has done himſelf farther honour, if not by more judgment and greater preciſion, yet by a larger compaſs, and more general and extenſive ſurvey of know-

knowledge, than has been taken by any of the followers of Mr. Locke, or even by Mr. Locke himſelf.

To his metaphyſical diſquiſitions he has ſubjoined a comment and critic on philoſophy at large, the ſeveral branches of it, and various ſyſtems and hypotheſes ancient and modern, and on the ſeveral maſters that have made the greateſt figure in the ſupport of their ſeveral ſyſtems: his acquaintance with whom, though general, is certainly very conſiderable; and though he has made no addition, nor ſupplied any new materials to the old ſtock of knowledge, yet he has ſhewn great induſtry and application (I will not ſay condeſcenſion) in digging into the rubbiſh, and mouldy ſtores of antiquity.

Upon the whole, we may the rather wonder, how one man was capable of knowing ſo much, than that he knew no more; and his very knowledge, ſo general and extenſive, is the beſt excuſe that can be made for his ignorance; and though he has many maſters and ſuperiors in every branch of ſcience, (except politics

politics and hiſtory) yet he has few equals in the general knowledge of all. If many have caught more game by beating well a particular tract of ground, yet few have taken ſo large a range as his lordſhip; and nothing but the unhappy ambition of being lord over all, has made his title and pretenſions diſputable, and his acquirements leſs conſiderable in the literary world.

It muſt be an uncommon vigour of mind, and almoſt peculiar to a Bolingbroke, which not fatigued by buſineſs, not enfeebled by pleaſure, nor checked by diſappointment and unproſperous ambition, could carry him through the execution (whatever were the motives) of an undertaking, which, infamous as it is in its tendency, and pernicious in its conſequence, required ſuch an immenſe variety of materials, fetched from the different ages and quarters of the world, to its completion;—incompleat and irregular as it is, and muſt appear to every correct and judicious eye. His attainments ſeem not to have been the ſlow effects

effects of induſtry and art, though he had a large ſhare of both, but the production of nature. He ſhews a ſuperior ſagacity in queſt of his game, and great natural vigour in the chace; and whatever he takes, (though not all that he ſprings) is done with ſo much eaſe, that it may ſeem to meet his purſuit; and what is taken is ſafely depoſited in that capacious and faithful ſtore-houſe, his memory, till he diſhes it up for his gueſts: and though the meſs be indeed ſometimes very coarſe and homely, and fitter for dogs than men, yet as his lordſhip was ſenſible, that we ſhould not be much enamoured of a death's head and poiſon, he ſerved it up in the moſt lordly manner.

His manner in general is graceful and entertaining, and I think original, yet he dilates too much, and in a tone too high. He has not only a majeſty, but what lord Clarendon calls a "ſovereignty of language:" yet commonly his periods are juſt and harmonious; his eloquence natural, yet raiſed: he ſpeaks with dignity,

nity, and he ſpeaks with eaſe: he is clear and unlaboured, ſo that you are not often at a loſs to underſtand his meaning, but where he has a mind to impoſe upon you by falſe logic, which muſt naturally embarraſs the ſenſe. I have ſcarce found any occaſion to ſtop a moment for his meaning, except where I have been confounded by an ill drawn inference, or an unnatural concluſion.

His ſtyle will ſcarce admit the character of humble proſe; it is not compoſed of mere ſimple terms, which ſerve to no other ends, in the hands of an ordinary writer, than barely to expreſs his meaning: It has a graceful harmony in the conſtruction, is enlivened by wit and ſatire, ennobled by eloquence, decently decorated by pertinent quotations from the learned, and enriched by the moſt appoſite and illuſtrious examples from hiſtory, ancient and modern. —— His cenſures and free raillery on the impertinencies of ſcholars, and the impoſitions of ſchoolmen, are not only juſt, but weighty, animated and ſtriking: he is the

the fartheſt from what you may call a dull or heavy writer, the common character of his tribe. He has much vigour of ſpirit, and fire in his conſtitution, which transfuſed into his compoſition, keep his reader ſufficiently alive, awake and attentive.

Nor is there any thing of force or conſtraint in his language: all is free, unlaboured and copious, and ſeems more the product of nature and genius, than of art or ſtudy. Other authors in reſpect of imagination and eloquence, you may compare to waters drilling ſlowly, drop by drop, from ſome penurious fountain, or forced by art into unnatural derivations, diſtortions, and a partial and ſparing diſtribution: but lord Bolingbroke is natural and unexhauſted, always full and overflowing, on ſubjects, the one the baſeſt, the other the moſt barren that can fall to the ſhare of a writer, viz. infidelity and abſtract ideas: he is copious as if he derived from a divine fountain; and though baneful in his contents, yet beauteous in his flow, as if he ſtrayed through the groves

groves of Paradiſe: the Syren's voice charms, though deſtruction is the ſubject of the ſong.

Lively and copious, accurate and elegant, though he is all theſe, yet all are too low to expreſs his manner and diction: gracefulneſs without art, and dignity without affectation; — eloquence unlaboured, and not tricked up or debaſed by the meretricious ornaments of rhetoric, nor formed by the eſtabliſhed rules of compoſition, but natural and original, like diſtinguiſhed ſtrength and beauty in other men, are characteriſtic of his lordſhip's language; and he may ſeem born to give laws to oratory, rather than to have borrowed any from the art: — his capacity very eaſily comprehended, his memory retained, his imagination combined, and his judgment ſelected the propereſt and brighteſt images, which the book of nature, in its various appearances, and the hiſtory of man in its various revolutions, preſented to his reading and obſervation. All theſe ſtood ready at his call, to embody his conceptions,

conceptions, to illuſtrate his opinions, to enliven his deſcriptions, and to give the faireſt appearance to his reaſoning. He is happy in the uſe he has made of travels and hiſtory, and of his various and immenſe reading; and in the application of it, to the illuſtration and embelliſhment, though not to the proof, as he ſhould ſeem to intend, of any preſent argument and opinion. We admire his eloquence, and are ſtruck with his wit, while we reject and deſpiſe his reaſoning. His exotic importations, as I would call them, appear in their new ſituation both natural and charming to the eye; but they intoxicate the brain, and are poiſon to the taſte. There is beſides an order and arrangement of his words; a grateful variety, yet happy coincidence in the turn, a graceful redundance in their length, and a maſculine vigour in the whole ſtructure of his periods: theſe are ſo full, ſo rounded, and ſo tempered with the juſt proportion of ſenſe and ſound, that we are at once informed and

charmed

charmed by an accuracy without method, and an elegance without art: Nature ſtill ſuggeſting, from her unexhauſted ſtore, variety to his conceptions, copiouſneſs to his diction, and order, ſtrength and ſplendor to both: and where the ſubject favours, as when public virtue, liberty, and national happineſs, the effects of the ſpirit of patriotiſm, and of the conduct of a patriot prince, come under his obſervation, his eloquence riſes with the riſing glory of his country; we are charmed with the deſcription; the proſpect is lovely, the colours are anſwerable, and we behold with delight and admiration the painter and the pencil, both the peculiar lot, and unrivalled honours of Britain. So that we may allow him the praiſe of a fine writer, ſo far as he has not debaſed his wit with ſcurrility, and his eloquence with ſome affectation and laboured pomp: that is, where his pride does not betray him, or his paſſion tranſport him to ribaldry, and a licence becoming a ſlave rather than the lord viſ-

count Bolingbroke. His own obſervations on the conduct and ſentiments of others, eſpecially when he is cool and diſpaſſionate, as on the ſubjects of hiſtory and politics, his proper province, are not only juſt, but refined; and though many of them had been made by others, yet they have in his hands a novel air, and the ſtamp of originals, with a ſuperior dignity and delicacy.

The political world and its ſyſtem was indeed the ſphere, in which he ſpread his faculties to moſt advantage, and as a theoriſt moved with moſt eaſe, moſt gracefulneſs and dignity: here he triumphs over the reſt of mankind, and even over himſelf. The ſtate of Chriſtendom, and of the ſeveral nations that compoſe it; — their conſtitutions, wars, alliances, and revolutions for ſome centuries, with their ſeparate and peculiar advantages, mutations, declenſion and growth, as well as thoſe of ancient Greece and Rome, he appears to have read, to have digeſted, familiarized to his memory,

mary, and embodied within his frame?—and perhaps no private gentleman better underſtands the character of his neighbour, the nature of the ſoil, with the products and limits of his own demeſne, than his lordſhip did the intereſts, whether natural, commercial, or political, of the ſeveral nations that compoſe the preſent ſtate of Europe. He appears to be familiar with the characters of their princes, the genius of their miniſters, and the various cauſes and circumſtances, natural and civil, which have contributed in various ages to form the manners, influence the politics, direct the arms, extend the empire, and to raiſe or depreſs the fortune of the ſeveral ages.—Here we are ſubdued by his reaſoning, we are inſtructed by his wiſdom, we are charmed by his eloquence; we admire his preciſion, and the more ſo becauſe of the extent of his knowledge:—that he could at the ſame time take in ſo general, and ſo particular a view of objects, ſhew the

connexion and reference they had each to other, and how cauſes diſtant in time, and remote from common obſervation, operating through a courſe of years, of ages and events, have produced later and more modern effects; — ſo that lord Bolingbroke might ſeem hiſtoriographer, or rather of the cabinet council for ſeveral centuries, to the ſeveral princes of Europe.

The age of Lewis the XIVth was peculiarly fitted to his pen: it was a grand political vortex, which draws within its ſphere the principal ſtates of Europe. His lordſhip, I think, acknowledges, that he has made this æra the ſubject of twenty years ſpeculation: and indeed the retroſpect he has taken, and the ſketch he has given us of the hiſtory, or rather the politics of this period, might have rendered the acknowledgment unneceſſary. He appears as a perfect maſter in the theory of this buſy ſcene. Characters, cauſes, conſequences, and connections are given and pointed out with the ſagacity of a hand, that ſeems to direct every

every motion, of a ſpirit that informs every wheel, and of an eye that catches the leaſt and laſt vibrations, and purſues the remoteſt effects of every ſpring in this huge and complicated machine. Here I think he peculiarly triumphs, not only in the ſobriety of his manner, but in the clearneſs of his matter; not only in the pertinence, but in the juſtneſs and force of his reflections, and ſolidity of his reaſonings; and in that eaſe and accuracy, with which he comprehends and diſcuſſes the rights, intereſts, demands, conduct, and views of the ſeveral contending powers: when he comes to ſee things at a nearer diſtance, and while they were, as he expreſſes it, in the tranſaction, he is ſtill more particular, more alive and paſſionate, pictureſque and entertaining: nothing ſhould ſeem more accurate, more juſt and judicious than his ſtate of the eaſe between the queen and her allies, and the ſtate of the war from its commencement to the treaty of peace at Utrecht.

The knowledge of human nature was eaſy, and clear to a mind capacious and penetrating like lord Bolingbroke's, and like his, familiar by practice and theory, by converſation and reading, with the hiſtory of mankind: — this is the proper ſchool of the paſſions, where they appear not delineated in the lifeleſs draught, and with the inſipid formality of a recluſe profeſſor, or the vague or crude hypotheſis of ſome new adventurer in moral philoſophy, but in their cauſes and combinations, their workings and progreſs by immediate effects, or remoter conſequences, cloathed with circumſtances and realized, and as I would ſay, embodied by fact and experience: but he ſaw ſtill further, not only the general current, but the particular turnings and windings of the human paſſions; — not only their ſimple uniform operation, but their effects when combined and complicated, or when operating upon particular parties, from particular principles or intereſts, or upon ſingle characters and in

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ſingular circumſtances: — and how each, or all, contributed to the forming in the views of human wiſdom, that political criſis, which, according to his lordſhip's deductions, influenced the ſubject of his preſent examination.

We muſt except from this merit of his political works, the eſſays that were written to ſerve the ends of a party, to gratify paſſion, and feed his reſentment. In theſe he has practiſed ſome of that ſubtilty he condemns in the ſchoolmen. And after all the applauſe that is given, and is due to his great political ſagacity, it muſt be acknowledged, that he has ſometimes a refinement in his reflections, and in his deriving effects from remote cauſes, that would eſcape the obſervation of common ſenſe, and will be found of little uſe to the common good; as his building ſo much — nay the whole ſucceſs on a prudence without piety, and a courſe of nature without providence, is the baſeleſs fabric of a political viſion; and which, civil hiſtory might have

ſhewn his lordſhip, had been by ſeeming accidents, to appearance the moſt trifling, demoliſhed in a thouſand inſtances.

We may perhaps not without reaſon apply to his lordſhip the remark, which Montaigne has made upon Guicciardini: "I have obſerved, ſays he, this of him, that of ſo many perſons, and ſo many effects, ſo many motives and ſo many councils as he judges of, he never attributes any of them to virtue, religion, or conſcience, as if all theſe were utterly extinct in the world." — The Frenchman adds; "This makes me ſuſpect that his own taſte was vicious; from whence it might happen, that he judged other men by himſelf." I wiſh there was no reaſon to apply this to his lordſhip: but his confeſſed admiration of Tacitus might eaſily lead him to, or at leaſt confirm him in, both his ſcepticiſm concerning providence, and his ill opinion of mankind. He gives you a general, but ſtriking review of times paſt, juſt obſervations

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on preſent objects, and rational conjectures of future conſequences: he ſtates facts, balances different intereſts, and weighs oppoſite powers: the genius of the ſeveral nations, the temper of the court and of the people are tranſiently, yet very expreſſively preſented to the reader: he is preciſe, yet not minute, as he is general, yet not confuſed, ſpeculative yet practical, refined yet rational and juſt. He reaſons with ſtrength and calmneſs, debates with temper, contradicts with decency, cenſures with modeſty, and condemns with ſeeming juſtice and impartiality. On theſe ſubjects his lordſhip appears to great advantage, and worthy of our admiration; adorned with ſobriety and wiſdom, with eloquence and authority, with the gravity of a ſenator, the unaffected grandeur of a ſtateſman, and the port and majeſty of a prince.

Politics were indeed his proper element; here he moves and ſpeaks with moſt grace, and appears to the greateſt advantage. He is clear, yet elegant, eaſy

eaſy yet ſtrong, — explicit enough and copious, yet with all that proper reſerve, diſcretion, decency and dignity, which he aſcribes to Lewis the XIVth; in whoſe character he is happy enough: and if he is not the moſt majeſtic writer, yet he has moſt the air of majeſty of any author I have ever yet met with upon the ſame ſubject; and has ſaid more to the honour of the Grand Monarque, and of his meaſures and miniſters, in two or three pages, than Voltaire has been able to ſay in two not inconſiderable volumes.

In theſe Letters on Hiſtory, where politics are the ſubject, you have a fine range of thought and comprehenſive view of things; and though confined in the narration to the compaſs of an abridgment, or leſs, yet exhibiting all the maſter-ſtrokes of a finiſhed hiſtorian; equal ſplendor and ſolidity are conſpicuous in the ſentiment and diction. He does but touch, yet touches ſo delicately, and with ſo fine a hand, the great and capital actors in the political drama, as to throw

light

light and order upon a whole ſeries of events: — whether theſe indeed were thus politically modelled in fact, as they are in theory; that is, whether they were projected with the views, conducted with the ſagacity, and attended with all the conſequences aſſigned by his lordſhip, I will not preſume to determine. But his genius is not leſs diſtinguiſhed in modelling his materials, or arranging them already prepared to his hand, but covered and diſguiſed by ignorance, miſtake or miſrepreſentation, and in giving them all a caſt of nature and probability. He is better at a political map, than an hiſtorical draught, — a better judge of meaſures than manners, and who would take more delight in unravelling an intricate thread of negociation, or an obſcure intrigue of policy, than in exhibiting to public view the brighteſt blaze of heroic virtue, or unaffected wiſdom. And hence we need not wonder, that Machiavel and Tacitus were his lordſhip's favourite authors,

But

But his excellencies, as a writer, are not confined to politics, and political ſpeculations: he has with much elegance repreſented, or rather expoſed ſchool-divinity and metaphyſics: his reaſon and his rhetoric are both uſefully and handſomely employed upon this occaſion; and ſubtilties and nonentities exiſt no where ſo gracefully, as in his lordſhip's confutation of them. The ſcandalous corruptions of chriſtianity by the church of Rome had been abundantly diſplayed by the proteſtant divines, by thoſe of the church of England in particular; yet his lordſhip's teſtimony to thoſe corruptions, deduced from perſonal obſervation and hiſtorical records, and a particular develope of the intrigues of emperors and popes, is by no means contemptible or inconſiderable; as the lord Bolingbroke had no party or paſſion to ſerve by his judgment on this ſubject, nor was prejudiced in favour of any particular communion of chriſtians. His indignation is here proper; his figures magnificent, maſterly and ſtrong; and

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if d'Holbein is a great original, my lord is a copier or commentator, whom few can equal. If he is any where more happy, it is in the picture he has given us, of the folly, foppery, superſtition and idolatry of the church of Rome: here we perceive he drew from the life, and had his ſubject clearly before him. The pencil plays its part in the moſt admirable manner: the features are ſtrong and ſtriking; the colours glow, and the figures move. The ſubject was indeed proper, and ſuited to his hand: ſpiritual truth was not to be expreſſed, but a gaudy, and a pompous ceremonial to be deſcribed: a temple, where marble, guilding, imagery, architecture make ſo principal a figure; rendering it a ſcene, much more ſuited for the imagination of a painter, than the habitation of a God. If his lordſhip is warm, it here becomes him, and his reſentment is pious.

He inveighs with propriety enough, becauſe with juſtice, againſt the licentiouſneſs of ſacred interpreters, and their arbitrary

arbitrary practice of giving ſo many different ſenſes to the ſame paſſages of the Bible. It muſt be further confeſſed, that much truth has been ſaid by his lordſhip, though invidiouſly enough, of the corruptions of the clergy: and as truth is always on the ſide of virtue, much good uſe may be made of his lordſhip's labours, on this ſubject: it may teach this venerable body, if at this day they had need of teaching, that by a conduct contrary to their profeſſion, they give occaſion to the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt, and arm infidelity with the keeneſt weapons againſt that church, of which they are members and miniſters.

What his lordſhip has ſaid againſt Cudworth and againſt Clarke, ſo far as the one or the other have made the principles of morality independent on the will of God, appears to me juſt and rational: to charge this opinion with abſurdity and impiety would be uncharitable, as ſome learned and good men have endeavoured to ſupport it. But we may aſk, where is the pre-eminence and ſupremacy

premacy of Deity tied down to a law common to himſelf, and to frail and mortal creatures? — Or where is the infirmity of mortals, conforming in their conduct to the order and method of an infinite and immortal God? What can imagination itſelf conceive in the immenſity of nature, detached from, or independent of the infinite and all-perfect God? Or not the effect of the conſtitution of the univerſal Creator? Is it not ſome degree of preſumption in us, who are often at a loſs in our enquiries after the ſprings of human action and policy, to give law to the eternal Mind, and preſcribe the method and order of its operations? — An heathen poet might claim ſome allowance in his extravagancies; but I muſt think it unbecoming, and unworthy of the faith, or the philoſophy of a chriſtian moraliſt and divine, to admit a better nature, and re-eſtabliſh Homer's Fate upon the throne of God. To talk of God's being obliged to act according to the nature of things, is ſuppoſing God an inſtrument in the hands of na-

ture: 'tis ſuppoſing nature without an author, and works before a workman: 'tis ſuppoſing God a neceſſary, not a voluntary agent, ſubject to a law before a lawmaker, and directed by a plan prior to eternity.

But if lord Bolingbroke ſeems to have the advantage over his enemies, and has ſaid many things well on this ſubject; yet I muſt needs think it the ſtrangeſt thing in the world, that the noble author, after ſo eager a conteſt for a morality dependant on the divine will, ſhould as eagerly contend againſt all moral attributes in the divine Being.

To conclude this encomium upon his lordſhip, and his excellencies as a writer, it muſt be acknowledged, that his abilities, as a reaſoner, where prejudice, party, or paſſion, or his ſingular principles interpoſe not, like miſts, to dim the ſight, and mar his diſcernment, were as conſiderable as his other extraordinary endowments, on indifferent as well as on political ſubjects, where his great ſtrength lay. He lays down premiſes, makes diſtinctions,

distinctions, and deduces conclusions with all the truth, accuracy, and regularity, though without the forms of the most precise logician.

We have only to exempt from any share of the applause which we have here given to lord Bolingbroke's manner and style in general, his Essay upon Exile, which must appear to a reader of taste and judgment, meer flourish, stoical rant, book learning, and pedantic declamation. The author here loses his usual dignity; or his eloquence is false and affected, as his arguments are childish and sophistical. It has more the air of the academy than of the manly reasoner, or sober philosopher, and looks more like a studied harangue upon a thesis given, than the effects of real distress, or the natural sentiments of a soul overwhelmed with sorrow. He plays with his subject, where playing is unseemly: he trifles rather than argues, and his affected grandeur rises almost to real burlesque; — sounding and pompous, unnaturally swelled, and outrageously stoical, he provokes our laugh-

ter rather than pity for the ſuppoſed ſufferer. Fate and Nature, and the courſe of human accidents, and a ſhuffled world, which the philoſopher calls in to his relief, were the juſteſt cauſe of complaint to a ſpeculative mind, in its ſufferings, of which it ſaw no cauſe or cure.

We may farther obſerve concerning his manner on other occaſions, that he goes too much about his ſubject before he enters upon it; uſes too much ceremony, circumſtance and parade before, and frequent digreſſions after he enters upon it, to be ſtiled a juſt, or a cloſe writer.

His large magazine of acquired knowledge made him too laviſh and oſtentatious of it: his political caſt, his philoſophy and incredulity, his pride, prejudice and paſſions break in upon him inſenſibly, as it were to divert him from the propoſed object of his enquiry: I ſpeak this with a particular eye to his letters on the Study and Uſe of Hiſtory; in which, if it muſt be allowed there are many pertinent and valuable reflections,

yet

yet it must be acknowledged, that the more ſcholar, the critic, the chronologer, the ſceptic and the modern philoſopher appear far more forward than the plain man, who is purſuing a project for improving men in virtue and wiſdom, and in the ſtudy of hiſtory. Something he is always finding or bringing into his way to refine upon, to deny, to doubt, or to diſpute, and which divert him too often, and too long from his main purſuit. He does not always give the moſt attention to thoſe parts of his ſubject, which are of the moſt weight and importance; but he adverts principally to ſuch as give the faireſt occaſion for the diſplay of his ſagacity, political, critical, ſceptical or philoſophical: hence ſometimes he treats matters of importance, and arguments of weight, with an air of contempt, and trifles with an air of importance. He ſo orders matters in the diſtribution of his work, as may give occaſion, and make way for his own favourite objections, opinions and obſervations; otherwiſe we cannot well ima-

gine how his attempt to invalidate the authenticity, and thereby the authority of the Goſpel, ſhould enter into his project of promoting the virtue and wiſdom of men by the ſtudy of hiſtory.

We cannot take leave of lord Bolingbroke's excellencies as a writer, without mentioning his letter to Sir William Wyndham; in which he has ſhewn himſelf a maſter indeed both in ſtyle and argument: he is convincing, as writing upon principles level to the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind. He is rational without refinement, and political without artifice; eaſy and natural, yet ſtrong and perſuaſive; conciſe and abridged, yet full and expreſſive: he is free without licentiouſneſs, humorous without lewdneſs — bold without paradox, manly without pomp or affectation; animated without rage, and an enemy yet not a calumniator: he has the language and dignity of a ſtateſman, and preſerves his temper and decency towards his political adverſaries of this period, in proportion

portion as he ſhould ſeem to have truth and reaſon on his ſide againſt them; he is ingenuous enough, though writing in defence of party, to confeſs his own, and the ſelfiſh, ambitious and revengeful views of all parties. He vindicates himſelf with ſufficient vigour and abilities, againſt the earl of Oxford, and the Chevalier de St. George, whom he expoſes not without ſome wit and humour, and without that envenomed rage, and illiberal ſcurrility with which he loads his aſſumed adverſaries, the divines. His deſcription of the meaſures taken by the court of the Chevalier, and by thoſe of his party, is natural, ſtrong and ſtriking, as evidently taken from life and nature, and an inſtant view of things. He ſeems to write with a heart more at eaſe on this, than on other occaſions: — perhaps the preſent ſenſe of royal favour, and the proſpect of future peace and ſecurity at home, had ſweetened his humours, and compoſed his ſpirits, ruffled by the ſuſpenſe, turbulence and diſgrace of his

late adventure abroad. —— The moral of the whole —— The alarm founded to Britain of the danger to be apprehended to her religion and liberties from the ſovereignty of a popiſh prince, may well atone for the noble author's political defection in this inſtance, to which every lover of his country, as well as every reader of taſte is obliged for one of the moſt maſterly compoſitions of its kind in the Engliſh language.

SECTION II.

HAVING endeavoured to do juſtice to our noble author's ſtyle and manner, particularly in his hiſtorical and political works, we ſhall be leſs liable to the objection of partiality, in the freedom we ſhall now take with the philoſopher, in his learned and laboured eſſays. Though his genius and original manner muſt be acknowledged, yet I think he has been an imitator, and much beholden to thoſe who have gone before him, eſpecially for his materials. Whoever comes after the author of the Eſſay on Human Underſtanding in the ſame tract of ſcience, muſt ſtoop the palm to him, and be content with a ſecond-rate fame, — as an imitator, at leaſt a diſciple of that great maſter: and whatever ingenious uſe or more pleaſing diſpoſition any future artiſt may make of the ſtream, we cannot view it in any ſhape, without reflecting on, and connecting it with the firſt ſource and fountain, Mr. Locke. And

lord Bolingbroke, though his Eſſay is ſtiled on Human Knowledge, yet lies under the ſame diſadvantage with others, that he is only a labourer in the mine which another diſcovered and opened. In what he has ſaid of metaphyſicians and the quibbles of logic, he had Seneca and Montaigne for his tutors, and has not ſhewn more wit on this ſubject, than the ſtoic in his ſober mood; though in elegance of manner, it muſt be owned, he far excels both the Roman and the Frenchman. He has the naturaliſm and ſceptical turn of Tacitus, without his excuſe, and often the ſhort contraſt and epigrammatical turn with the ſcurrility and vanity of his favourite author, but with leſs delicacy, leſs modeſty, and more malignity: for in preſumption, in malice, invective and vanity, he has outdone, I think, all the writers, even of his own ſect, that ever went before him. However as he has improved upon the manner of his predeceſſors in infidelity, ſo he has diffuſely commented upon their materials; for I cannot ſay, that I

have

have yet found one new objection made by lord Bolingbroke, againſt either the Jewiſh or Chriſtian religion. Moſt of the philoſopher's objections againſt Chriſtianity are as old as Julian and Celſus, from whom he differs little, but in greater incredulity, and in denying what they had much better opportunity to diſpute and diſprove, but admit, viz. the actual miracles done by Chriſt and his apoſtles, as recorded in the New Teſtament; whoſe contents they alſo allow, and authenticity, and only deny its divine authority. In other reſpects his lordſhip has copied them as ſervilely as he has done Tindal, in extolling the perfection and ſufficiency of the law, and confounding it with the light of nature; though Tindal in other reſpects, and even in the indulgence he pleads for, to the appetites of nature, is a ſaint compared to lord Bolingbroke. — Spinoſa ſeems to have been his favourite amongſt the philoſophical, I ſhould ſay the atheiſtical, as Tacitus was amongſt the hiſtorical writers. By a peruſal of the Atheiſt's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,

ticus, we ſee that it is no new thing to recommend morality, ſo that with leſs offence, religion may be wounded and demoliſhed; that a knowledge of God may be preached, yet confined to a knowledge of nature: — that they have been long ago cenſured, who have thought themſelves the darlings of heaven, and that the univerſe was made for man, one of the moſt inconſiderable creatures in it: — that miracles and new diſpenſations have been treated as abſurd and impoſſible, from the immutability of God, and the no efficacy of miracles upon the Iſraelites, objected: — that the whole hiſtory of Moſes, the prophets, and Chriſt Jeſus, has been denied, from ſuppoſed oppoſition of it to the general courſe of the material ſyſtem; and that the Pentateuch, Joſhua in particular, has been charged as a late forgery jumbled together by Eſdras.

That "the divine knowledge is without ideas," an ingenious and ſenſible writer tells us, is the pure, undoubted offſpring of lord Bolingbroke's own invention. I conceive

conceive it is not: Hobbs had ſaid the ſame thing, had excluded, as well as his lordſhip, all moral attributes in the Deity, and reduced all our knowledge, concerning the ſupreme Being, to this,—That there is a God *: as the ſame Hobbs might give his lordſhip the hints, or the example of abuſing the univerſities, and of treating all thoſe who differed from him, as learned lunatics, Don Quixottes, &c. †—As for the diſtinction his lordſhip makes of all enthuſiaſts being madmen quoad hoc, though in other reſpects decent, modeſt and prudent, he is obliged for it, and many other remarks, which he gives as his own, concerning the propagation of religion by force, to Mr. Sale, in his preliminary diſſertation to his tranſlation of the Koran.

That there is no intelligent Being, which judgeth of the goodneſs, or malice of human actions, is no novel opinion,

* Hobbs Tripos, p. 69, 70.

† Tripos, p. 67.

though

though his lordſhip might reſpect it the more, as it is the preſent orthodox faith of the Siamois, as monſieur Loubere acquaints us in his account of the kingdom of Siam *: the ſame author too furniſhed the philoſopher with that curious anecdote in the religion of the Hottentots, of the two principals—or the Captain above, and the Captain below. The joke was not here to be loſt: the term Captain employed on this occaſion, having in it ſomething ridiculous, when applied to our ideas of the ſupreme and infinite Being, was enough to juſtify the author's impiety, and to manifeſt his wit and free ſpirit, in caſting off all fear both of God and the Devil.

There is ſomething ſingularly diſingenuous in the philoſopher's conduct in combating the cauſe of Chriſtianity and Judaiſm: I mean not in his giving other men's objections as his own, but in carefully retaling from unbelievers of every age and nation the moſt groundleſs inſi-

* P. 380.

nuations

nuations and the groſſeſt calumnies, as if he believed them true; and boldly urging objections, which have been clearly and fully confuted, as if they ſtill remained in their full force, and had never received any anſwer.

But what ſurpriſes us moſt, is, that lord Bolingbroke, — a ſpirit ſo high, and genius ſo ſublime, ſhould ſubject himſelf for a courſe of years to the ſervile drudgery of ranſacking the writings, and compiling and producing to the world the crude and ſlimſy obſervations and objections of men, whom on any other ſubject he would have treated, in point of knowledge, literature and criticiſm, as the moſt contemptible of their kind. Here you ſee the arm of Hercules employed, not to cleanſe the ſtable of Augæus, but to gather up the rankeſt ordure, left by former occupants, and to preſent it as the moſt precious ointment, for the refection of his readers. Yet ſtill a Bolingbroke appears even in this dirty work: his philoſophical labours contain a compleat body of infidelity ancient and modern:

dern: and if the arms he has employed against religion, are borrowed, they have received from his hands a new polish and splendor: and if he has not always managed them with more dexterity, he has pushed them with more hardiness, intrepidity and vigour, than was ever done by any preceding champions. They were indeed but dwarfs or pygmies; and compared with him in respect of genius and eloquence, Morgan is pert, Tindal is laboured, languid and heavy, Middleton is only not insipid, and Shaftesbury cold, stiff and affected. And if the arms of infidelity, combined and conducted under the banners of lord Bolingbroke, are not successful and victorious, it is for this reason alone, that they are directed against Heaven.

SECTION III.

FROM the manner we are come to the matter, from the form to the ſpirit of lord Bolingbroke and his works, — from the noble writer to the mere philoſopher: — And what a change of character have we here: —

— Alas! how fall'n from him;
Who lately in the happy realms of light,
Cloath'd with tranſcendent brightneſs, didſt outſhine
Millions, though bright! — MILTON.

His lordſhip's works are called philoſophical; but they are not properly and ſtrictly ſo. The word, Philoſophy, is indeed often in his mouth, but makes a very little part of his learned labours, which conſiſt rather of obſervations at large, hiſtorical, critical, and political, logical, philological, phyſical and metaphyſical. He tells us ſometimes, and with ſeeming ſerioufneſs, "that all thoſe "ſtudies which have no intention towards "improving our moral character, have "no pretence to be called philoſophi-

" cal *:" and he condemns, or cenſures all knowledge " in compariſon of that, " which tends to make us happier and " better." His lordſhip therefore has not, by his own confeſſion, the cleareſt title to the name of philoſopher, who through the greateſt part of his poſthumous works, has employed his labour to deſtroy all moral virtue in man, and all moral attributes in God. If " the true " and proper object of the application of " our minds, is a conſtant improvement " in private and in public virtue, † — and " ſtudy ſhould make us better men and " better citizens;" we may reject his lordſhip's laſt preſent to the public, as uſeleſs, and pernicious to mankind.

The ancient philoſophers made moral virtue, at leaſt their profeſſion; and even the moſt licentious of them, no leſs than the ſtoic, pretended to a ſeverity of manners: the diſciples of Epicurus, to ſalve the credit of their ſect, attempted to ſhew,

* Letters on Hiſtory, Vol. II. p. 68.

† Ib. Vol. I. p. 14.

that

that this was their master's practice. But our modern philosopher has no regard to appearances;—leaves us at large to animal instincts, and talks familiarly of his bowl of punch, and bottle of sack; while in another mood, he can upbraid the patriarch, for a mercenary virtue, in asking bread to eat, and raiment to put on.

He appears, from his whole manner, to have intended more the pomp of his learning, than the solidity or use of it. He has not, that I remember, advanced one new truth, or confirmed an old one; and is a mere critic and commentator on other men's opinions, whose works he seems to have read with little other view, than to distinguish himself, and to expose the rest of mankind, as knaves, or fools, or madmen.

The province of philosophy, of old, was to instruct mankind: his lordship's purpose is, to undeceive them, and to expose the common delusion. Philosophy professed its design was, to promote truth and happiness: my lord leaves you entirely for your advancement in these,

to mere nature, the mother of ignorance, vice and misery. Philosophy, the platonic especially, taught its scholars to aspire after a divine life in this world, in order to obtain a happy immortality in the next;—his lordship leaves you at large, to indulge to the instincts of a brute, upon the prospect, so far as his persuasion has any influence, that you are to die like one.

Though I have read this noble lord's works with some care,—I could never find out their genuine use, and the burthen of the song, The First Philosophy. Wherein it precisely consists, what are its principles, its beneficial effects and happy tendency to improve the morals and advance the happiness of mankind, are as much unknown to me, as if the philosopher had never thrown his thoughts upon paper. Philosophy of any kind, properly so called, especially if we confine it to the province my lord assigns it, that of physics, is the least and the most inconsiderable part of his works, and he has

has done little more upon the ſubject, than obſerve upon the obſervations of others;—he has not, that I know, made one diſcovery in nature, or in one inſtance enforced or improved morality.

As to the primacy he has aſſigned to this favourite dame, I know not whence he derives its title: not from the dignity of the ſubject, as ſhould ſeem—nor from its ancient pretenſions, but as one may reaſonably imagine, from the dignity and pretenſions of its author. Lord Bolingbroke was the firſt Philoſopher, who ſaw the follies, the abſurdities, the madneſs of all his predeceſſors, and undertook, in charity to mankind, to remove the common error. Had his lordſhip called his work, the Firſt Theology, though the term is obnoxious, it had better anſwered his deſign; which ſeems to have been not ſo much againſt Des Cartes and Malebranche, as againſt Moſes and the Prophets, Paul and Jeſus, and the general ſuperſtition and impiety, which their doctrines and opinions have occaſioned through the world.

Other writers have adorned morality, and recommended virtue, by elegance and example;—by exhibiting, in the faireſt colours, the happy fruits, and loveliеſt draughts of it, in the characters of moſt eminence: his lordſhip's labours are little relative to morality and virtue; and you will find yourſelf entirely miſtaken, if you ſtudy the Firſt Philoſophy, with a deſign to better your heart, or advance your happineſs: no man ever did more, to diſcourage and diſtreſs the virtuous, to confound the weak, and to confirm the wicked, than Lord Bolingbroke.

The buſineſs of the Firſt Philoſophy is, it ſeems, in its beſt and proper exerciſe, when it acquaints you, that you are to make uſe of your eyes and your ſenſes, and to examine the phænomena, by obſervation and experiment. Does the fig pleaſe you?—ſtart up and examine the tree and the place, where it grows;* there you are to ſtand ſtill, and advance

* Vol. II. p. 88, octavo.

no

no further: thanks, or a thought to heaven, would be a proceeding unpardonable in the First Philosophy; whose business it is to exclude God from all his works: for this, is Democritus commended, and Anaxagoras; that is, for dwelling on second causes, without respecting the first: — and yet our author affects sincerely to honour those philosophers, who have endeavoured to raise the thoughts of men, by their discoveries, from the phænomena, up to the author of nature; but tells us, I think with the same breath, that a Boyle, a Ray, a Derham and Nieuntyt were not wanted to convince us of the self-existence of an intelligent Being, the first cause of all things.

How unhappy is it for the fame of Plato and his followers, that they should incur Lord Bolingbroke's censures, for not confining themselves to physics, when their professed design was but to teach men virtue, moral and divine! Unhappy Socrates, who confined his lessons of philosophy to ethics, and who with sincerity, perseverance and zeal, dedicated

himself to the establishment of natural religion, and died a martyr to it, when his whole employment should have been, according to our noble lord, the examination of corporeal nature. He intended to improve the moral character of mankind—a labour, according to Lord Bolingbroke, which alone deserves to be styled philosophy; yet he is condemned by the same Lord Bolingbroke for corrupting philosophy, by not attending to the investigation of natural properties.

It may be well expected, that the noble philosopher should assign sufficient reasons for this degradation of morality, and this superior attention he calls for, to the study of nature. We are, it seems, to have our labour for our pains: "we "shall be always seeking, says he, and "always to seek †." Here we may rest satisfied: this is the solid foundation, whereon the mind may repose itself. Our forefathers have been fools, as we may be, and all generations yet to come,

† Vol. II. p. 256.

Causes, we now discover, may be no more than effects of causes, still to be discovered; and which in their turn may appear effects of causes still more remote, and still discovering: so that future advances in knowledge, are still but a farther progress in ignorance; and after all our study of corporeal nature, the book he holds out to us, as alone worthy of our perusal, the labours of all the learned of all ages, may be no more than sick men's dreams, and convince us of this comfortable truth, that supreme wisdom formed us with rational faculties, to pursue and embrace a shadow. So far has he carried his scepticism, as to insinuate, that all we see, and all we know, may be no more than deception and falsehood; and that such knowledge is however sufficient for us, since God is the author, that is, of the deception.

Should we admit the insinuation, what would be the consequence; but that the insinuator is the most impudent of dogmatists, in affecting to vindicate the truths of God, and banishing the errors

of mankind, when all he writes, and all we read, may be nothing but deluſion and falſhood? He encourages the ſtudy of phyſical knowledge, as if it were the only knowledge worth acquiring, and he particularly commends the experimental, as the only method to proceed by: yet after all this, our experiments and our knowledge may be good for nothing;—"for further diſcoveries of "the phænomena," we are told, "may "contradict the concluſions drawn by in-"duction from obſervations and experi-"ments, or ſuppoſing no ſuch diſcove-"ries to be made, other concluſions may "be deduced from the ſame phænomena, "or other cauſes of them may be aſſign-"ed, for ought we know." Thus while his lordſhip would be thought to mortify our pride, he only betrays his own; "the ancient philoſophy," he tells us, "was but the rattles and baubles of the "infant world;* and even the lateſt

* Vol. I. p. 49 & 54.

"ſyſtems

"hypotheſes may not be al-
"ways the trueſt."

The enquiries and philoſophical ſpecu-
lation, to which his lordſhip would con-
fine us, would, ſuppoſe them purſued
with proper ſucceſs, be both endleſs and
needleſs.——For let us hear his own
words. "Attraction, which gives us the
"idea of a cauſe, and which may be,
"notwithſtanding all the ſilly abſtract
"reaſoning to the contrary, a real pro-
"perty of matter, will give us then the
"idea of an effect, as this new cauſe
"muſt do in its turn, as ſoon as ſome
"further cauſe is diſcovered, and as that
"further cauſe muſt do likewiſe, as
"ſome other ſtill more remote is brought
"to light." Such is Lord Bolingbroke's
philoſopher! a man who of all men liv-
ing may moſt deſervedly be ſtyled a fool,
if to weary one's ſelf for very vanity,
and this knowingly and profeſſedly, may
deſerve the title; he would much more
merit the character of a wiſe man, who
ſhould ſet down contented and acknow-
ledge his ignorance, at the firſt ſtep of
his

his enquiries, and the first link of effects and causes, than he who should push his pursuits, with much labour and fatigue, through several progressive steps, or links of being, and be at last obliged to make the same acknowledgment. This is indeed certainly better, than to beat the same round for life, and find yourself at last where you first started. For suppose we push our enquiries far and wide, and attempt to follow the philosopher in his researches, into the natural and metaphysical world: what is to be the fruit of our labours, or the result of our discoveries? His lordship tells you: "that what has existence, exists; and "that what has no existence, exists "not;—that sensual objects are the ob- "jects of sense, and objects knowable, "are the objects of knowledge:" In short, that what is, is, and that nothing besides has any existence, but what exists: which surely are notable discoveries, and must prove of great advantage to the learned, among whom, according to his lordship, there have been long disputes about a thing,

thing, and after all it has been found, that there was no such thing in the world.

Philosophy, in its proper extent, sober use and application, is a noble science; but to confine it to notions, to nature and ideas, to matter, motion and mechanism, excluding morality and theology, is to contract, degrade, and abase it. Such a philosophy is a name, a sounding name, and little more; and lord Bolingbroke, with all his reform, is as much an ontologist, and an ontosophist, as any he has censured; the great point he labours, and the opinion or doctrine which he combats most, is that of general and abstract ideas, independent of, and not deduced from particular substances.

Now let the truth be on what side it may, or let us suppose lord Bolingbroke a conqueror in the wordy controversy, what mighty advantage will hence accrue to human knowledge? Or say, that knowledge is hereby improved: is it thereby increased or advanced to a proportion that may deserve the name of wisdom?

wisdom? A wisdom, that will justify all the noise, and all the labour it has occasioned; (for the patriot is not more vehement or pathetic in support of the dying virtues, and expiring liberties of Great Britain) — or is it a wisdom, worth all this contention, zeal and boasting, that gives you not one useful lesson in life, neither conveys, nor confirms one moral or religious truth; nor in the least contributes to remove vice or misery, or to promote the virtue and happiness of men? The metaphysical abstractions of his lordship, and of those whom he opposes, being alike useless to the benefit of common life, and to the promotion of morality. Let then the noble conqueror advance with abstract ideas, and substantial forms, with tabliaty, and gobliaty, dragged to his chariot-wheels! The monsters you have subdued, my lord, were of little prejudice, and indeed little known to the bulk of mankind. They were at best no better than amusements: — amusements, his lordship calls them, and acknow-

knowledges that they were taken up, and laid down, like romances: and though he had a few pages before, lamented their growth and ſpeed *; yet he now owns that they were begun to grow out of date; as they certainly never had any legal ſtamp, or general currency, to the prejudice of common ſenſe, and the common intereſt of mankind. If metaphyſicians and theologians are ſuch wretched reaſoners, and contemptible enemies, a conqueſt over them can claim no conſiderable merit.

If it be ſaid, that by this knowledge, and regulation of our ideas, we are enabled to reaſon more juſtly on other ſubjects, I think this diſputable. It is however certain, that this knowledge, in which the lord Bolingbroke ſhould ſeem ſo great a maſter, has not removed in him one paſſion or prejudice, which are the great obſtructions to truth in our enquiries; nor has he more preciſion, clearneſs, conſiſtency and ſtrength in his

* Vol. I. p. 131, &c.

arguments,

arguments, than thoſe who wrote a hundred or a thouſand years ago, and were ſtrangers to this new diſcovered world of ideas.

Philoſophy was in its original and primitive uſe, and application, a great and venerable name: it profeſſed to lead men to, or confirm them in, the knowledge and worſhip of the gods, and to inſtruct them in the duties they owed to ſociety, and to each other. It was ſtyled the guide or art of life, as ſent down from heaven to remove the miſt from human eyes, to cure or correct the malignity, and impotency of the human paſſions; to teach man to deſpiſe pleaſure, and to conquer pain, to fortify the heart againſt vain terrors, vain glory, and falſe infamy, to implant modeſty, greatneſs and tranquillity in the human mind, to point out the way to truth, virtue and happineſs, to impreſs a ſubmiſſion in all things to the divine providence, and to refine and habituate the ſoul to immortal expectations. Profeſſors

of

of such philosophy were certainly, we know, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Xenophon; of the same character, though by a profession of a different sect, were in latter days Marcus Antoninus and Seneca. I mention these two in particular on the present occasion, to shew, that when princes and statesmen condescended to philosophize, it was in a way not unbecoming their dignity, and which raised them to a character superior to that, which the exercise of royal authority or ministerial power, which the decrees of a senate, or the applause of nations could give. By it patricians added to their native honours, statesmen to their dignity, princes to the lustre of their crown; and slaves and plebeians, in true greatness of mind, and the fame they have left behind them, have rivalled princes.

I may be indulged while I enlarge a moment on the character of the imperial philosopher.

Antonine

Antoninus was in the main, a ſincere and practical man; his philoſophy was ſeated in the heart, ſeated there as on its throne, from whence it gave laws to his thoughts, life and conduct, regulated his paſſions, allayed his reſentment, ſilenced his complaints, and diſpoſed him to meet every fortune, and to embrace, as the allotment of providence, whatever might befal him, whether in life or death. A ſupreme regard to the ſoul or reaſon, that ray of divinity in man, and affection for truth and virtue, and a reſpect to the public intereſt and happineſs, with a contempt of popularity or fame — of ſhewy grandeur and falſe pleaſure ariſing from an indulgence to ſelfiſh and unreaſonable paſſions, to avarice, ambition, and luxury, with the little moment or value of all the buſineſs of mortality, except the diſcharge of our duty, are the ruling principles, that run through the writings of this royal philoſopher: The leſſons which you every where meet with of piety, and ſubmiſſion to the gods,

of

of good faith and juſtice, mildneſs and candour, humanity and benevolence to men, — and of modeſty, temperance, fortitude and contentment, and contempt of the world, appear to be all the tranſcripts of his own practice: you obſerve little that is affected, ſwelling or pompous in his manner, that can perſuade us, that vanity had any influence upon his compoſition: all is plain and natural, pathetic and ſincere. Where we have a greatneſs in the expreſſion, which is but rare, it ariſes from the greatneſs of the thought, as in the following inſtance. "The vaſt continents of Europe and "Aſia are but corners of the creation; "the ocean is but a drop, and mount "Athos a grain in reſpect of the uni-"verſe: and the preſent inſtant of time "but a point to the extent of eternity *." ——At other times if you find an expreſſion ſomewhat raiſed, affected and forced, it is owing to an unnatural thought, into which he was warped almoſt unavoid-

* B. vi. p. 36.

ably by his philoſophy, which yet was the beſt of his times, and which, as a wiſe and good man, he adopted, in oppoſition to the impious ſyſtem of Epicurus.

On the other hand, behold our noble Britiſh author in his eſſay on the Firſt philoſophy, ſwelled with vanity, and a conſciouſneſs of ſuperior abilities, contending for or rather arrogating to himſelf the prize of genius, wit and learning, at the expence of all that is dear, and held ſacred with mankind. Confounding the ſoul with the body, and degradeing the man to the brute, leaving or rather leading both to the inſtincts of nature for the rule of their conduct, and to be purſued without fear or ſhame; — as being liable to no inſpection, and ſubject to no divine government, and without God or hope in the world. The material and ſenſitive is his lordſhip's firſt, and the only philoſophy: all beſides this, is, and has been ſince the creation of the world, mere ignorance or impoſition — the dreams of madmen, the

invention

invention of knaves, and the deluſion of fools: and this ſad ſtate is ſo far from moving his lordſhip's pity, that it ſeems rather a field, where he expatiates with pleaſure, and reaps all his triumph and glory. The reflections of Antoninus are plainly the reſult of cool and deliberate thinking: all is full of reaſon, goodneſs and public ſpirit: one would not imagine, that an emperor, living in the ſplendor of a court, ſurrounded with armies and flatterers, was ſpeaking, but a philoſopher retired from the hurry of the world, and wholly engaged in the purſuit of truth and virtue.

On the contrary, in our Britiſh philoſopher, the man of quality makes too conſpicuous a figure: he dictates like a prince to his ſlaves; — or like an inſolent, haughty and cruel conqueror, inſults you as a vanquiſhed and deſpicable enemy. The Roman eſtabliſhed Reaſon on its throne, and ſhews you where your real ſtrength lies: the Briton expoſes, and ſeems to triumph in the vulgar igno-

rance. The laſt would ſeem engaged in the purſuit of ſpeculative truth, the other is wholly intent on recommending ſincere and practical virtue: and while the one would be thought to detect errors, the other labours to reform the vices of mankind. Antoninus inſiſts, that you are, and ought to act up to the dignity of a man; Bolingbroke, that you are, and may lawfully indulge to the inſtincts of a brute.

Thus then ſtand the proofs of his lordſhip's title to the name of a Philoſopher. If the buſineſs of philoſophy is to depreciate morality, and to ſubſtitute nature and inſtinct for our guide, in the place of reaſon and virtue: if it is the buſineſs of philoſophy, to give the reins to the paſſions, and to reduce mankind to a level with brutes, — to confine all virtue and knowledge, both moral and divine, to a perception and indulgence of the natural ſenſes — and to conſtitute fleſh and blood, as the touchſtone and proof of ſpirit and ſpiritual nature: if it is the

buſineſs of philoſophy to exalt the body, and deſtroy the ſoul, to take away all reſtraint from the vicious, and all comfort from the virtuous and unhappy: if it is the buſineſs of philoſophy to deny God's attributes, and his providence, and to baniſh his exiſtence from the world, — then, and not otherwiſe, is lord Bolingbroke to be allowed the Firſt Philoſopher; for Epicurus ſcarce went ſo far as his lordſhip.

View the ſtate of man on the ſcheme of this philoſophy, and then you will form a juſt eſtimate of the worth and merits of the author: — A creature blind and miſerable! — and to whom neither heaven nor earth can afford light or comfort! born with aſpiring faculties, to comprehend nothing! — naturally fond of immortality, never to be obtained: endowed with knowledge, to know his wretchedneſs phyſical and moral! He ſees enough of God, to aſcertain his Being: he ſees too little, to acknowledge his attributes: God is all perfection; — but has no regard for man,

whose composition is mere matter, and Nature his mother and guide! An atom pervading, but lost in the infinite that surrounds him! An atom, the sport of atoms; alternately tossed by reason and passion, the principles of his frame, and the authors of perpetual discord, yet ordained by the God of order to be alternately obeyed! — Exposed to evils, which can be neither avoided, nor softened, nor cured; and for which he is to seek no remedy, but in himself, that is, the sufferer *; and to whom it is sufficient comfort to reflect, that if he is evil-entreated by the world, — there is no harm done, as the world was not made for his sake, nor he to be happy. He is thankfully to enjoy the benefits he receives, and if misery is his lot, and the dust his reversion, there the First Philosophy leaves him, as it finds him, to thank God for the perfection of his nature, and the means of his happiness †.

* Vol. IV. p. 317. † Vol. IV. p. 333.

Such

Such are our Theiſt's pious prayers and meditations! — It is true, he frequently profeſſes his deſign and the end of his labours to be a vindication of the cauſe of God againſt atheiſts and divines. This too was a pious undertaking in the noble lord: but then he ſhould not have given us occaſion, or evidence, to ſuſpect that he frequently takes part with the former againſt the latter: he ſhould not have attempted to perſuade mankind, that there is no God, that requires either their prayers or praiſes; nor affected to cenſure the Epicureans * for making the ſupreme an indolent Being, and wholly unconcerned with human affairs; while he as peremptorily denied the divine agency, below the ſphere of the moon, as Epicurus. Religion, at bottom, was the great and grievous miſchief, the reigning poiſon, which had infected the whole race of man, and which his ſovereign antidote of the Firſt Philoſophy, was to counterwork, and for ever expell.

* Vol. IV. p. 153, 4.

He treats with more ſevere language, as more profane, thoſe chriſtians, who made God preſide over Chance, and direct it by interpoſitions of his providence, than he treats the Epicurean atheiſts, who aſcribed the creation of the world to Chance. The proceſs of theſe men's reaſoning he gives us with much temper, coolneſs and complacency; and leaves the authors, without the leaſt reflection upon their perſons, or expreſſions of diſreſpect to their principles and opinions.* The philoſopher Democritus is, it ſeems, excuſable, though he made too little mention, or no mention at all in his works, of the ſupreme Being, becauſe theology was not his object: but the Pythagoreans, Platonicians, and divines are condemned for intereſting God in every thing, though their profeſſed object was theology. Nay, though Democritus denied God, his ignorance, to be ſure, deſerves pity, becauſe others have

* Vol. I. p. 168.

defamed

defamed him, and deſerve abhorrence. The general body of mankind have, according to his lordſhip's repreſentations, quite through his works, been the defamers: to avoid the imputation of which, the alternative rather to be choſen, is, according to our pious theiſt, atheiſm*.

This however is to be admitted, if as his lordſhip ſhould ſeem to think, an atheiſt may be a very good man: for he occaſionally argues for a morality and love of virtue that may be true and real, without the knowledge, and even conſiſtent with the denial of God†.—So far he is conſiſtent: but what a ſtrange beginning is here; and who could have expected this, immediately after his profeſſion of a general analyſis, and particular defence of Chriſtianity?—Or, this was perhaps no more than laying foundations deep, and like a philoſopher;—or, it may be the ſally of a pindaric wit, who in defence of the chriſtian ſyſtem,

* Vol. I. p. 90, 91. † Vol. II. p. 288.

would

would reverse the heathen rant of a Jove Principium, and so begins with Nature, or a world unmade*.

His lordship pursued the same method, and recommended it to others, in the study of nature, which he, as a statesman, probably pursued in the business of politics. Here, he considered all that happened, in the moral and civil world, as the effect of human contrivance;—— of reason and passion, without admitting God into the scene†.—Hence he was led, when he entered upon philosophy, to consider and account for the phænomena in nature, and mechanical causes, by matter and motion, with little or no regard in fact had, to the first efficient Cause, the maker and mover of the whole.

After all this, I would not charge Lord Bolingbroke with atheism; he has, in other parts of his works, acknowledged in the strongest terms, and affect-

* Vol. II. p. 289. † See 2d vol. Lett. on Hist.

ed to defend the exiſtence of God: but it is a God of his own framing; whoſe ſubſtitute is Nature, in the contemplation of which, and ſubmiſſion to which, ſeems to conſiſt all his lordſhip's philoſophy, religion and devotion. Nor have there been wanting in former times, philoſophers and devotees of the ſame ſtamp: Leibnitz in his Theodic. tells us of one John Joachim Becher, a famous German doctor and chymiſt, whoſe addreſs in prayer began thus; "O holy "mother, Nature, thou eternal order of "things:"—And the doctor had certainly good reaſon for his manner, whatever his lordſhip had, "that Nature ought to forgive him his ſins, of which ſhe was the author*."

After all this, we may well admire at his lordſhip's modeſty and conſiſtency, who could exclaim againſt thoſe, who apply all the reaſon they have to corrupt

* Leibn. Tent. De Bon. Dei, p. 1125. tom. III.

the

the morals of man,—and to baniſh all ſenſe of religion†.

He affects indeed ſometimes to ſpeak upbraidingly enough of natural, compared with moral philoſophy, and he has fairly allowed the neceſſity, or utility of religion to the ſupport of ſociety: yet I cannot perceive, that as a man, he knew any thing more of private morality, than of chriſtian piety: he is not angry ſo much at the vices, as the follies of mankind: his head was large, but his heart was little, and his paſſions ſtrong. Public glory, public liberty, public happineſs, are what chiefly ſeem to compoſe his ideas of good, and great, and juſt.

True greatneſs was with him mainly annexed to the regal, and true wiſdom to the miniſterial adminiſtration. Civil virtue, civil and natural good are all he ſeems to have reliſhed, at the bottom. Natural inſtinct was his guide, and natural happineſs his aim. I confeſs, I

† Vol. IV. p. 391-2.

deſpiſe

deſpiſe him, as the meaneſt of his kind, who could ſo eaſily adopt the manners, and ſo zealouſly contend for the death of a brute. Of all the madmen he has ſo freely condemned, I know none more ridiculouſly ſo, than his lordſhip.

I cannot take leave of Lord Bolingbroke in his philoſophic character, without expreſſing my ſincere admiration of the conduct of our great Bacon in the ſame character. The picture of a philoſopher is perhaps no where better drawn than by his pencil, and in his own example. He ſhews a love of, and ſincerity for the intereſt and advancement, without affecting the pomp of learning:—he is free, impartial, and an honeſt cenſor of paſt times, and without ill-nature or ill manners,—or the air and tone of a dictator;—deep, yet not myſterious, penetrating, but not abſtruſe;—great, yet not ſwelling; animated, yet with temper and ſobriety;—copious without being tedious or tautological: his judgment is correct and ſolid, with a wit lively and ſublime, and never

tempting

tempting him to a wild and profane licence, or rude inſult upon ſacred things, for the ſake of the joke: his imagination is the moſt fruitful and extenſive, ranging at large through all the ſciences, all the times and regions of the univerſe; ſuggeſting new thoughts and ideas, and ſupplying him with an unexhauſted fund of the fineſt images, to expreſs and embody thoſe ideas: ſo that with the moſt logical preciſion you have the ſublimeſt eloquence; and neither of them ſeem the effect of art or labour, but the reſult of an original and native force of genius, triumphing over the barbariſm of the preceding, and over the pedantry of the times in which he lived *. His knowledge was ſo comprehenſive, and univerſal, that he may ſeem not to have been a learner, but a profeſſor of every ſcience; not only acquainted, but familiar with all ages, and admitted as a miniſter to the

* This is ſpoken of Lord Bacon's character, as a Philoſopher, and with a particular eye to his great work of the Advancement of Learning.

inſpection

inſpection and myſteries of all nature. Hence he is never at a loſs for great examples, and moſt venerable authorities, and the fineſt and grandeſt images, wherewith to prove, to confirm, to expreſs and adorn his own juſt reaſoning, and profound conceptions: yet amidſt this maſs of borrowed wealth, the ſtrength and ſplendor of his own native ſtock of genius, ſhines forth unimpaired and unrivalled, and ſeems rather to lend a luſtre, than borrow any from the authorities he produces: his depth, his ſeverity, his dignity and majeſty ſet him up, in my judgment, above every lettered name, that has yet appeared in the world.

With a capacity more than the ordinary ſize; — a giant in the intellectual world, he breaks through the chains, with which authority or tradition had fettered the human mind; — ſubdues monſters, the errors formed and foſtered by ſuperſtition and ignorance — paſſes the fatal columns fixed as the ſuppoſed boundaries

boundaries of human knowledge, and opens new tracts of light, and regions of truth, before thought impracticable, and incapable of culture or profit: — he attempts the head-ſprings of nature, which, like thoſe of the Nile, were before deemed inveſtigable. And ſuch is his rare temper and the dignity of his mind, intent as it were upon nothing but truth, or in his own noble language, vanquiſhed with "the immortal love of "truth," that while he detects and proſcribes vulgar errors, he commits no outrage upon the ancient occupiers, nor offers any groſs inſult upon the common ſentiments of mankind. "Nor have "we," ſays he, "endeavoured to ſet "off ourſelves with glory, to draw a "majeſty upon our inventions, either "by triumphs of confutations, or de-"poſitions of antiquity, or an uſurpa-"tion of authority, or the veil of obſcu-"rity, which are arts he may eaſily find "out, whoſe ſtudy is not ſo much the

"profit

" profit of others, as applauſe to him-
" ſelf*."

Thus with a ſuperiority, without the pride of genius, we need not wonder, that " humble as the humbleſt child of " faith," he diſavows whatever does impair, or intrench upon ſacred truth and divine authority, and addreſſes in this his arduous undertaking, his ſolemn prayers for aſſiſtance and illumination from Heaven.

It is not eaſy, where nature is the ſubject, and its powers and properties the propoſed object of enquiry, to paſs over in ſilence the name of Mr. Boyle. —Lord Bolingbroke talks of the phænomena, Mr. Boyle had obſerved them: Lord Bolingbroke overwhelms himſelf and his reader with names, philoſophers and opinions,—Mr. Boyle was engaged in the actual examination of nature's properties, of cauſes and effects: —Lord Bolingbroke is a loud and boaſtful cham-

* See lord Bacon's preface, p. 16.

pion for ſcience, Mr. Boyle a more ſilent and ſincere admirer of truth: 'Lord Bolingbroke was not, that I ever heard of, an inventor or diſcoverer of one thing, or in one inſtance an actual promoter of natural knowledge, for whoſe honour he would ſeem ſo much concerned, and in which he would be thought ſo great a proficient; — but Mr. Boyle was a real adventurer, and made diſcoveries, before unknown in the phyſical world, and promoted the knowledge of it with an aſſiduity equal to, if not beyond that of any man in his own times. — But without making any further compariſon, let us obſerve how differently affected were the two philoſophers, profeſſors, as it ſhould ſeem, of the ſame ſcience.

Mr. Boyle, after all his labours and ſucceſs in the attainment of knowledge, repreſents experimental and natural philoſophy not only as expenſive and tedious in the apparatus it requires, precarious in the proceſs, and uncertain in the iſſue, but even in its beſt end and uſe, when

when promoting the knowledge of phyſics, and the invention of arts, and increaſe of commerce, that is, as it is made ſubſervient to the health of the body, and the advantage of animal and civil life; — this philoſophy, I ſay, which lord Bolingbroke conſiders as the only philoſophy, that deſerves cultivation or a name, Mr. Boyle repreſents as far inferior in kind or order, to that which concerns religion, and an immortal mind.

Lord Bolingbroke would confine all philoſophy, to the ſtudy of nature; and all natural philoſophy he would make center in itſelf, that is, the propoſed object of your enquiry is to limit your views; as ſhould the pebble or plant be this object, the organical ſtructure or diſpoſition of the parts is all you are concerned in, and its uſes, ends, and author are to be kept out of ſight, and ſhut out from all conſideration. But Mr. Boyle would have moral improvement, and the promotion of virtue and piety derived from the ſchool of nature; and he thinks,

as the beſt and wiſeſt have always thought, that mankind might hence both raiſe and improve their truſt and admiration, their love and joy in the Almighty Maker: beſides, that philoſophy, when purſued in the ſpirit of religion, and not as a matter of mere curioſity, will be an act of devotion acceptable in his ſight, who can alone ſupport us under pain and death; — when the material or mechanical philoſophy, like the diſtant planets, or fixed ſtars, can afford us no light, influence or comfort.

Thus then the one recommends the ſtudy of nature for its own ſake only; the other for its own, and for the ſake of God its author: Lord Bolingbroke ſhould ſeem to propoſe it as a pleaſure; Mr. Boyle, as a pleaſure, and a duty: Lord Bolingbroke ties us down to the analyze of nature, as to a feaſt; Mr. Boyle, as to a feaſt, and a ſacrifice: Lord Bolingbroke propoſes no delight but in the chaſe of the game, Mr. Boyle has this delight in common with his lordſhip, and this heightened by the proſpect of offering

ing it to his father, and inheriting his bleſſing.

The one, by his reſearches, ſeems intemperately to have ſought his own applauſe; the other, principally to intend the glory of his Maker: the noble lord ties you down to the diſſection of an atom, and if he idolizes any thing beſides himſelf, 'tis Nature: but our humble philoſopher leads you from all mean and ſelfiſh views, to contemplate and adore the God of the univerſe: —Lord Bolingbroke would confine our knowledge of God, and indeed of all philoſophy and religion, to a knowledge of nature; as he would limit God's manifeſtation of himſelf, to the works of creation; but Mr. Boyle tells us, that "though the "material world be full of the produc- "tions of his wiſdom; yet that hinders "not but that the Scripture may be en- "nobled with many excellent impreſſes, "and as it were, ſignatures of the ſame "attributes; for it cannot but be highly

" injurious to the Deity, in whom all " other true perfections, as well as Omniſcience, are both united and tranſcendent, to think that he can no ways " contrive to diſcloſe his perfections, " beſides the ordering of matter and " motion; and cannot otherwiſe deſerve " to be the object of men's ſtudies, and " their admiration, than in the capacity " of a Creator *."

And afterwards he obſerves that " thoſe to whom God hath given the " privilege of natural reaſon, ſeem not " to enlarge their thoughts enough, if " they think, that the Omniſcient and " Almighty God has bounded the operations of his power, and wiſdom and " goodneſs to the exerciſe that may be " given them for ſome ages, by the " production and government of matter " and motion, and of the inhabitants of " the terreſtrial globe, which we know to " be but a phyſical point, in compariſon

* Excellency of Theology, p. 37.

"of that portion of univerſal matter,
"which we have already diſcovered †."

"And is it, ſays this good man, a
"piece of that [gratitude] and of inge-
"nuity, to receive one's underſtanding,
"and hopes of eternal felicity from the
"goodneſs of God, without being ſoli-
"citous of what may be known of his
"nature and purpoſes, by ſo excellent a
"way as his own revelation of them!
"To diſpute anxiouſly about the pro-
"perties of an atom, and be careleſs
"about the enquiry into the attributes
"of the great God, who formed all
"things? To inveſtigate the ſpontane-
"ous generation of ſuch creatures, as
"inſects, rather than the myſterious
"generation of the adorable Son of God?
"And, in a word, to be more concerned
"to know every thing that makes a cor-
"poreal part of the world, than the
"divine and incorporeal Author of the
"whole?"

† Ib. p. 52 and 54, &c.

As a philoſopher, and a moraliſt, he ſaw many things made clear by revelation, which before had been "phyſically precarious," as he himſelf expreſſes it; as — not only the creation of the world and of matter by God — the origin of the world, and its final diſſolution more clearly aſcertained; but the univerſe itſelf enlarged by revelation, which opens to us the kingdom of ſpirits, their temper and diſpoſition; and of our own future ſtate, before uncertainly known, or known only by traditions derived from the Jewiſh Scriptures.

He acknowledged revelation to be the teleſcope, which brought to nearer view, and ſet in a fuller light, thoſe great truths of religion, which the naked eye of reaſon could not, or not diſtinctly and ſufficiently diſcern: and he fairly tells us, what every impartial ſcholar muſt admit, that the deſcription or account of the divine attributes, by the fiſhermen of Galilee, is much ſuperior to that, which has been given us, by thoſe whom reaſon alone enlightened, — by Greeks and Romans, by ſages and philoſophers. He

ſaw and confeſſed the diſtinguiſhed benefit of that knowledge, which the Scriptures afford us — of the moral attributes of God, — of his righteouſneſs in rewarding the good and bad, and of his mercy in pardoning the penitent: and that theology teaches better and nobler truths, and with more clearneſs and authority, than philoſophy ever did. — If lord Bolingbroke has objected differences of opinion, and difficulties indiſſoluble in theology; Mr. Boyle has ſhewn, that the ſame objection lies againſt philoſophy; and that there are as good grounds of moral certainty in the one, as of phyſical demonſtration in the other; and that myſteries being inſeparable from body, which lies ſo near, and ſo open to us, are much more reaſonably to be admitted, in our ſpeculations concerning ſpirit. Lord Bolingbroke is captious and cavilling, and moſt obſtinately exceptious againſt all evidence of religion, and its moſt important doctrines: but Mr. Boyle thought, and thought with good reaſon, that matters of this weight and concern-

concernment ought to procure a welcome for all good mediums of probation.

I would only further obſerve on occaſion of the two characters now before us, the different effects, which different principles have on philoſophers employed on the ſame ſubject. In Mr. Boyle you have temper and ſobriety, candour and benevolence to man, and a rational yet exalted devotion to God. He may ſeem to have been ſome heavenly ſpirit deſcending, and aſſuming a human form, in order to ſurvey the wonders of this lower frame, and from thence as from a new ſubject, to raiſe in himſelf and others a new ſource of adoration and gratitude, and new ſongs of love and praiſe: — Lord Bolingbroke we may too ſuppoſe a ſpirit of an higher order, but moving from a different ſphere, and employed in inveſtigating the works of nature to a different purpoſe, excluding the Almighty and all-gracious Author, and extinguiſhing in himſelf, and endeavouring to extinguiſh in others, every ſentiment of love to God and man.

Com-

Compared then with the philoſophy and philoſophers of the greateſt name and diſtinction, both in ancient and modern times, or conſidered intrinſically or without any compariſon, Lord Bolingbroke's philoſophical labours are in reſpect to the materials and tendency at beſt impertinent, and can claim no rank, attention or fame, as the legitimate offſpring of true wiſdom.

It had then been happy for his lordſhip's fame, and ſurely not unhappy for the world, had he avoided that rock on which he built, and on which he wreck'd his character, the Firſt Philoſophy: for we may aſk, What or where is this Firſt Philoſophy, which he hath ſet up as the great idol of mankind? what is its foundation and eſſence? what its extent, limits, and properties? what is its importance, its excellence, or dignity? Its definition, I think, has not yet been given, and its beneficial effects I am ſtill to ſeek. Will it advance the health of my body, or promote the peace of my ſoul? will it enlarge my underſtanding? correct

rect my paſſions? purify my heart, or refine and exalt my nature? Or what benefit will the public reap by the propagation of this new commodity? will civil life be adorned, or moral virtue be improved by it? or has it any tendency to introduce a general reformation, and thereby a new acceſſion of happineſs to the world? Are we hence to derive greater ſecurity to our property, more vigour to the laws, or a new charter to our liberties? Will this new doctrine enforce fidelity, and obedience upon ſubjects and ſervants, or mercy and truth upon maſters and governors? or will it bring any ſignal benefit to Britain, render her happy and united at home, or reſpected and terrible abroad? will it clothe her vallies with plenty, enlarge her commerce, or extend her empire? Does the creation, viewed in the light of this new philoſophy, ſhine with more luſtre, or preſent us with more beauty? does God appear more preſent with his works, or man more happy under his government and protection? If

If theſe queſtions can be anſwered in the affirmative; let the philoſopher have his ſtatue erected in marble, in the capital of the kingdom, and let his name be engraved on the pedeſtal in letters of gold!—Let preſent and future ages hail the day of his nativity! and let his name be held ſacred, till time ſhall be no more! But if not only different, but quite oppoſite effects, are directly deducible from, and the natural conſequence of his principles; let his friends lament, and let the reſt of mankind forget, that the philoſopher ever had a being!

SECTION IV.

AFTER we have thus considered his lordship's principles, as a philosopher, we are better prepared for, and shall be less surprized at, his manner and practice, as a moralist and a man.

A philosophic liberty might have been allowed him; but not content with this, he proceeds, like the men he censures, licentiously*; and while he would be thought to consult the interests of virtue, he has opened the door to universal immorality.

It is possible, that the pleasures and casuistry of a court had not the best effect upon his lordship's manners; and he came into philosophy, undisciplined in all moral respects, contrary to ancient prescript, and with all his passions, not only unbroken, but enflamed, and was as much an ene-

* Vid. vol. I. p. 64.

my

my to moral purgation, as to metaphyſical abſtraction. His diſlike to the Platoniſts, as well as the myſtics, was, the tendency of their opinions to raiſe men to a greater moral perfection, than agreed with his lordſhip's conſtitution: their notions, as well as their ſouls, were too much ſpiritualized, to expect his approbation: hence his pity, or rather his contempt for the "good madmen," who talked of conſcience and heavenly tranquillity, of ſpiritual exerciſes and profound meditations *. In truth, his averſion and antipathy to religion and ſpirituality, ſeem to have riſen from his taſte and paſſions, which were formed and habituated to different objects. Nothing can more diſplay the corruption of our author's heart, than his illiberal banter and treatment of Socrates. This beſt of men in the Gentile world, was for his ſtrict adherence to truth, confined to a priſon, waiting with the ſerenity and firmneſs of a martyr, for his unjuſt exe-

* Vol. II. p. 116.

cution.

cution†. Agreeable to his character and circumſtances, he perſeveres to the laſt, in his exhortations to his friends, to cultivate virtue, and to riſe above the feculence of ſenſe, to intellectual enjoyments, and an imitation of the firſt and beſt of Beings. I will not dwell on the powers of language, employed upon this occaſion, which make it almoſt impoſſible to reſiſt the charms of this dialogue. The greatneſs I admire, is the conduct of Socrates, in his ſubmiſſion to providence, his victory over his enemies, and the world, ariſing from his ſtrong confidence of a bleſſed futurity: but he employed, it ſeems, in his diſcourſe, and in this dialogue of the Phædo, (though nothing can be more raiſed and lofty than the whole) an argument that was falſe, and an alluſion that was futile; and for this, he muſt be expoſed by our philoſopher, to contempt and laughter. All the laugher gains by it, is, that he muſt for ever forfeit all pretence, if not to genius

† Vol. II. p. 73.

and

and taſte, yet to morality and virtue; and we cannot help deſpiſing the man, who cannot forget his attachments to, after he has outlived the joys of ſenſe. But platonic abſtraction was, it ſeems, the ſame as chriſtian perfection:—ſufficient reaſon for the philoſopher, to laugh at both; and to keep "his old man with its "affections and luſts;" and to leave aſpirations after truth and God, and immortality, to platonic madmen, and chriſtian metaphyſicians*.

His pretence is, to humble human pride, while in fact he has debaſed human nature: and, as if ignorant of our rational powers, and moral endowments, would have us keep our thoughts fixed on the "ſenſible connexion between us and other animals†," to whom however he is liberal enough, in giving them the uſe of reaſon. 'Tis a pity they cannot, in ſupport of his argument in this place, (though it would ſpoil it in another, where

* Vol. II. p. 82.

† Vol. II. p. 114. & vol. IV. p. 378.

he cenſures Moſes for conſidering them as reaſonable creatures) pay him their compliments, as we think not ourſelves under the like obligation.

It was, we may preſume, from the philoſopher's ſagacity, in obſerving the manners of the brutal world, that he deduced his clear and eaſy ſolution of matrimonial caſes; and what elſe relates to polygamy, divorce, &c. It was amongſt the animal tribes, that his lordſhip poſſibly found the genuine charter of the law of nature, uncorrupted by artificial theology, and metaphyſical jargon. And indeed if brutes can reaſon like men, why might not men copulate like brutes? How does the noble author here debaſe himſelf and his kind? He falls even in his manner and diction, far below his uſual ſtate, and the very pretence to virtue and morality; and betrays the moſt licentious heart, in ſhewing how far the law of Nature, explained by his philoſophical comment, may carry a man. We here ſee the poetic fable, in ſome ſort verified; and the father of Gods and men

men leaving his ſceptre and empyreal throne, to aſſociate with bulls and goats, and the other commoners of nature:

——— Sceptri gravitate relicta,
Ille Pater rectorque Deum, cui dextra triſulcis
Ignibus armata eſt, qui nutu concutit orbem,
Induitur tauri faciem; miſtuſque juvencis
Mugit, & in teneris formoſus obambulat herbis.
OVID. L. 2.

The noble lord here acts the low, immodeſt, illiberal droll, without the leaſt ſenſe of his own dignity, or the decency and reverence due to mankind, to whom his obſervations have no reſpect, but under the character his lordſhip was pleaſed to give them, of two legged brutes, and "of the ſame nature with the vileſt of the animal kind *." Mankind it ſeems were growing Puritans or Myſtics, which troubled the Philoſopher's conſcience, as a preacher of righteouſneſs, which is by the law, and put him upon inculcating on a degenerate world, "the rights and reaſonable indulgence of Nature."

* Vol. IV. p. 126.

There is ſomething the moſt ſhocking and impudent, in the noble lord's whole procedure upon this ſubject; and, I ſuppoſe, the common ſenſe and virtue of mankind, were never more groſly inſulted, by any writer of name, in any age or country. With ſhame and indignation, we read, what the philoſopher, with a jocund inſolence and libertine rudeneſs, was not aſhamed for his own ſake to publiſh: but perhaps it was not amiſs, that he gave us the bottom of his heart: we here ſee the whole man and his communication. The caprice of humour, or the luſt of nature, is, it ſeems, the law of nature; and by applying his lordſhip's principles, and following animal inſtinct for our guide, we are taught to conſecrate the moſt flagrant enormities; and rage, revenge or murder may be defended, may be aſſerted, as lawful, by the natural law, and our philoſopher, its prieſt and interpreter.

It is true, he frequently profeſſes himſelf a friend to virtue: and theſe profeſſions, I ſuppoſe, we are to take as ſuffi-

cient amends made, for the peculiar zeal he has ſhewn, in advancing ſuch principles and opinions, as directly tend to encourage vice, and have been in all ages embraced by the vicious, for their ſecurity.

His morality diſcovered itſelf plainly Epicurean, in his Letters upon Hiſtory: he ſeems to blame that "ſolemn mortal" who abſtains from pleaſures. His ſcheme of happineſs and tranquillity ſeems to have no relation to his country, or the public, for whoſe welfare, he is ſo laviſh in his profeſſions. In the beginning, I think it is, of one of theſe letters, he ſeems to relinquiſh the feaſt of ſenſe, becauſe he is ſated, and to give over the chaſe of joy, becauſe he is grown decrepit. Yet ſtill mere ſelfiſh enjoyment is all his aim. To give the range to genius, to feed the taſte and pamper opinion, to indulge the luſt of the mind, and unſhackled by the buſineſs and devoirs of life, to expatiate at large in the fields of paradox and theory, and unactive contemplation: — this is the glorious employment of our virtuous hermit, the

character he affects — he assumes, and which a Stoic would have blushed to own.

He has acknowledged, more than once, the utility of religion, to the well-being of states and governments: and the good effects (though these he afterwards denies) of maintaining it; and the bad effects of neglecting it, had, he tells us, been extremely visible in the whole course of the Roman government *: — And yet he has, with unwearied application and diligence, endeavoured to destroy religion from the minds of his countrymen, and of all mankind.

He has been frequent and full in the praise of the Christian religion; yet he has employed every argument and objection, even the most absurd and ridiculous, to cancel its evidence and bring out of the world.

He asserts, "that no religion ever ap-
"peared in the world, whose natural
"tendency was so much directed to pro-

* Vol. III. p. 69.

"mote

" mote the peace and happineſs of man-
" kind, as the Chriſtian. * " From what principle of benevolence then, to his fellow creatures, does the noble author go about to weaken the authority of that book, in which it is contained? Had the Goſpel been directed to promote the greateſt calamities and miſery among mankind, the Philoſopher could not have contended more againſt its authenticity, nor been more ſcrupulous in admitting the evidence that makes for its eſtabliſhment. It is not againſt Theology alone, but againſt Chriſtianity, that this author has levelled his moſt deadly arrows, as againſt ſome monſter of nature, that devaſted cities, laid kingdoms in blood, and ſcattered plagues and deſolation through the world.

His impiety is of a bolder ſtrain, than any that has appeared in our age and country. Nay, the Mahometan, if not the Pagan, has paid more regard to Chriſtianity, than our enlightened Phi-

* Vol. II. p. 286.

loſopher: who may ſeem by his manner, to have been of another kind of being than his fellow mortals; for, with a rage more than human, he braves both God and men, — defies Hell, and laughs at Heaven.

His temper was ſo thoroughly ſowered, and the evil genius of Infidelity had ſo infected his moral powers, that he ſaw nothing lovely in nature, virtue, religion or God, — the originals of beauty, and whence the ideas of fair and happy are derived to mankind. The Philoſopher could not repreſent, what he never experienced, — the delight of conviction, the bleſſings of faith, in the moral attributes of God. Divine mercy and goodneſs being excluded from the preſent, and all future adminiſtration of things, what light or comfort could his lordſhip ſtrike out, and preſent to his reader from the dark and malignant ſyſtem of nature? The myſtic and devotee may be viſionaries, but they are bright and happy ſouls, compared to that which informed his lordſhip's clay: their language and ſentiments

ſentiments breathe of Heaven; whereas the Philoſopher's ſoul, being a compound of mere ſenſe and matter, could conceive no higher ideas, than thoſe which were ſenſible and material.

His lordſhip's eager contention for the phyſical, to the deſtruction of, and in contradiſtinction to the moral Attributes, is a ſpecimen both of his philoſophical pride and immoral attachments. The righteouſneſs and goodneſs of God have been of general belief, by the wiſeſt men of all ages; and his lordſhip's ſuperior abilities had not been diſtinguiſhed, without diſſenting from the common faith. At the ſame time, every motive of ſelf-intereſt, general benevolence, love to virtue and piety, ſhould induce us to wiſh the ſupreme Being, perfect in goodneſs and holineſs; and none, but the malignant, who had no claim to mercy, or the flagitious, who made no pretence to virtue, would deny ſuch excellencies aſcribed to his Maker.

We may adore and tremble at his power, or reverence and ſubmit to his wiſdom;

wiſdom; but while theſe are not directed to promote our virtue and happineſs, the Son of Saturn, and the Daughter of Jove, have an equal right to our love and gratitude.

Grant to the Philoſopher, that the ſupreme Being has no regard to the happineſs or virtue of his rational creatures, (though his lordſhip has again and again aſſerted, that the Will of God in the conſtitution of this ſyſtem, bears witneſs to both) what benefit, we may aſk, would be derived to man from the conceſſion? Might we not thence infer, that there could be no eſſential perfection in righteouſneſs and goodneſs, ſince the all-perfect Being could ſubſiſt without them: though after all, to allow the effects to be conducive to our virtue and happineſs, and to deny the efficient to have any regard to either, is far above my comprehenſion.

His lordſhip well knew the influence which example has upon practice: and that the diſciples of every art and profeſ-

ſion

ſion copy after the faireſt and moſt finiſhed models. His lordſhip allows that our buſineſs in the world is morality: and ſurely it would avail not a little to our improvement herein, that we conſidered our Maker and Governor, as perfect in holineſs, goodneſs and truth. Say, that he is otherwiſe, and that we could bring ourſelves to the abſurdity of ſuppoſing him devoid of theſe attributes, while we are ſurrounded with all the effects of them in the conſtitution of our ſyſtem; ſhould we be more enamoured of the virtues,— more obſervant of him, or more beneficent to our fellows,— when we knew that he neither regarded us nor them? Wiſdom to project, and power to execute, might, indeed, be ſufficient foundation for the creed of a politician; but ſuppoſing God acting without juſtice or mercy, the reflection of the mob, that is, of the bulk of mankind, would be, "Ego Homuncio non idem facerem?"

Upon

Upon this view of his lordſhip's moral character, and the tendency of his labours, I cannot but add ſome ſhort reflections made as it were in the inſtant upon firſt opening the previous packet, and diſcovering the ſecret of the Firſt Philoſophy.

How wretched is the policy of the preſent age? how perverſe the reaſoning, and how mean and miſerable the application of that learning and genius, that is left among us?—To deſtroy the checks of conſcience, and diſſolve the bands of religion!—Blot out the Sun from the natural world, and you would do leſs miſchief to the ſyſtem, than by denying providence, or excluding God's inſpection and agency, from the rational creation. Let the dread of futurity, and the terrors of the Almighty be laid aſide, and what wickedneſs will not be attempted, as often as the feeble reſtraints of human laws can be overruled, or evaded? Let God be ſuppoſed a lazy ſlumberer on the throne of heaven,

ven, and what comfort remains to the afflicted, what remedy for diſtreſs, or opium againſt deſpair? Our beſt fortune is diminiſhed, and our worſt embittered by the gloomy ſcene, that infidelity preſents to our future proſpect. Life would not be worth a thought, or a wiſh, was it ſuppoſed to conclude our whole exiſtence, and its departure to put an end to our Being. No ſcheme of rational theiſm can be ſupported upon the denial of immortality. To ſee ages and generations of rationals, playing a ſhort-lived part, and then ſinking into nothing,—guilty of crimes for which there remains no puniſhment, expoſed to hardſhips which anſwer no end, and labouring under miſery in the cauſe of virtue, for which there was laid up no reward:—this would be mere mockery upon man, and ſurely beſpeak neither wiſdom nor mercy in God. The apparatus of ſun and ſtars,—of rationals and irrationals:—the accompliſhments of Nature, the powers of genius, and the moral powers

and

and improvement of man;—all riſing but to ſet, and living but to die;—abſorbed in endleſs nothing, and mingled with death and eternal oblivion, were a ſcene of things unworthy the divine wiſdom, and affronting the divine goodneſs. Better had been none, than ſuch a mock exiſtence: better not to have been at all, than to have been the ſport of chance in life, and the prey of worms and inſenſibility in death:—at beſt, the bubbles of our hopes, framed with capacities not to be gratified, and anticipating joys never to be accompliſhed.

As ſure as God exiſts, this can never be our caſe; for it ſubverts every attribute of juſtice, mercy, and truth, of wiſdom and holineſs, which are neceſſarily annexed to the idea of the Supreme, all-perfect Being.

But were it poſſible, without blaſpheming heaven, to ſuppoſe no providence, and no future ſtate: what ſhould we gain by the ſuppoſition? What new ſecurity to the obſervation of law, and

to

to the properties of mankind? What new peace to individuals? What new motive or principle of virtue, to influence the general practice?—If the infidel ſcheme promiſes nothing but deſtruction, both to public and private happineſs, why all this aſſiduity and vigour employed to bring it into execution? Why zeal employed to promote ſcepticiſm in theory, and immorality in practice? Such zeal is the rage of Devils, ſet on work to ſecond the cauſe of hell, and to bring ruin upon mankind, in both worlds. The man that kills my body is kind, compared to him who would undo my ſoul: I can bear to be miſerable here, but I ſtartle at the thought of being undone for ever. I can ſupport misfortune and glory in it, under the appointment of providence, and the protection of a guardian God: but affliction, the reſult of mere matter and motion, the neceſſary conſequence of a phyſical ſyſtem, impoſed for no end, and whoſe iſſues are death preſent, and death eternal, is ſuch

pure

pure evil, such fruitless and absurd misery, as my faculties are unequal to. Yet, strange as it may seem, the man who attempts my property, or robs me of a trifle, is turned over to judgment, and doomed to execution: but the man, who encourages the crime, by destroying the strongest obligations of conscience;—the man, who patronizes villainy and recommends vice;—the man, who would cancel the authority of the divine laws, and set every man at liberty to do what is right in his own eyes;—the man, who would rob me of the truest peace, and my eternal reversion in Heaven; this man is borne with, is recommended, is applauded, is admired, as a genius, the man of science, and a friend to the rights and liberties of mankind.

This man tells me, that miracles are no proper proof of an extraordinary divine revelation, because not agreeable to the ordinary course of Nature; and another assures me, that there are some inconsistencies in the genealogies given us by the evangelists, and numerous

various

various readings to be found in the ſeveral copies of the Greek Teſtament, by which he would infer, that the authors were not infallible.

Suppoſe both theſe gentlemen's objections valid, — (neither of which are ſo) what am I a gainer by the diſcovery? Why I learn, that the Goſpel is not to be depended on; — that the beſt moral ſyſtem in the world may have no authority; — that the beſt example may be a picture of ſhadows; — that I am not accountable to God for my conduct; — have no promiſes of pardon for my ſins, nor proſpect of reward for my virtues; — that Providence is a dream, and Heaven a fable.

Suppoſe Chriſtianity, which is eternal truth, were no more than a ſolemn cheat, I ſhould not thank the man who would undeceive me. To be under the power of principles, that would influence and ſupport me in life and in death, I ſhould call a happy deluſion. If I was all this while in a dream, I ſhould think the

man a villain, who awoke me — awoke me to truth and misery, — to know my real state to be real sorrow, and dispelled my ignorance, at the expence of my happiness: the next thing I should request of him, would be a dagger or poison, to rid me of that wretchedness, into which he had brought me, and to make me some amends for his cruelty. Nor could the infidel object to This, my superior happiness in life; or refuse me an expedient to get clear of my misery, which his brothers had, in consequence of their own principles, in more instances than one, made use of.

If your criticism has found a flaw in the genealogies, and your philosophy cannot clearly admit the authority of miracles, and the doctrine of a future state; and thence, you Critic, and you Philosopher, think proper to reject the Gospel of Christ; yet what motives of conscience, what spirit of benevolence compel or invite you to publish your discoveries to mankind? I find both joy and peace in believing: I feel myself,

while under the influence of Chriſtian principles, filled with hopes, full of immortality: I am ſatisfied with God's preſence in this world, and love and long for his appearance in another. Why, cruel critic and philoſopher, will you rob me of the joy of my heart? Why remit me to the elements of Nature, the doubts of ſcepticiſm, and the melancholy imagination of no paternal Providence, and no redeeming love?—Enjoy your guilt and your gloom alone! go, utter your complaints to the woods and rocks:—breathe out your wretchedneſs in ſolitude, and the deſert; and infect not the world with the poiſon of your principles:—go, herd with the brutes, whoſe appetites you adopt, and whoſe death you are willing to die; but curſe not me with your diſcoveries, nor kill me with your truths! O tear me not from God, the rock which I find reſt on; nor preſs me down the precipice of deſtruction before the time! Comfortleſs world, and melancholy Nature, when Providence and

Immortality are ſhut out of the proſpect! How cruel is the ſtorm? How wild the winds blow! how loud the waves beat? How am I tempeſted in the ocean of the world: — ſteering by no chart, directed by no pilot, bound for no port, but where

Lethe the river of Oblivion rolls!

How was I but now tranſported: a parent God appeared in dazzling radiance: the winds and waves obeyed his word: my bark ſailed ſecure under his guidance: a ſhore of ſafety and glory lay in proſpect! What dæmon hand has ſnatched from my ſight, the happy viſion? The radiant God, and bliſsful ſhore are vaniſhed; and I am preſented with horrid rocks, and opening gulphs: darkneſs and death ſurround me: terrors from above, and from below, confound me!—

SECTION V.

THUS far we have conſidered, with more pain than pleaſure, the philoſopher's moral character: the reaſoner falls next under our conſideration: And if fortune, place, and title, with the commerce of the world, might have the ſame effect upon our great man, which they generally have upon human nature, —might impair his moral ſenſe, and affect the religious principles of the youthful ſtateſman:—yet from the Lord Bolingbroke, declining in years, retired from buſineſs and the world, and devoting himſelf to the ſtudy of truth and wiſdom, we might expect coolneſs, preciſion, ſober and ſolid reflection, and the ſuperior abilities of a ſpeculating philoſopher. The man who ſtands forth to charge others with error, folly and madneſs, ſhould, we might preſume, be diſtinguiſhed above others for the rectitude and perfection of his own underſtanding: and Lord Bolingbroke ſhould have been the laſt of mankind, to expoſe him-

ſelf to the cenſure of impiety and preſumption in his principles, or futility and falſhood in his argumentations: and as the largeſt ſhare of his lordſhip's fame, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed excellency of his character ſhould ſeem, in his own opinion, to have been founded in this talent of reaſoning; his works from beginning to end, ſeeming to avow nothing leſs than a general examination, and confutation of the vulgar notions, and falſe principles of other men in theology,—nothing leſs than a review and reform of the doctors and doctrines, of philoſophy and philoſophers of all ages and nations; a particular enquiry, how he has acquitted himſelf in this arduous undertaking, may ſeem both neceſſary and equitable, as his attempt is not only to ſhake, but to remove and diſſolve foundations. This enquiry is ſtill the more neceſſary, as his manner is original, and preſents you at firſt appearance with a novelty and greatneſs not common to authors,——and as that univerſal genius attempting the ſeveral branches of ſcience,

and

and kinds of literature; ſome of them in their nature ſo abſtruſe, others in antiquity ſo remote, and all of ſuch high import and general concern to mankind; ——his talking ſo fluently, quoting ſo familiarly the moſt venerable authorities, his aſſerting ſo roundly, and with that air of ſuperior wiſdom and the tone of a maſter,—may beget in ſome of his readers an undue prejudice in his favour, if not an abſolute ſubmiſſion to his authority.

But here it will be with ſome difficulty, not for want of materials, but through the abundance of them, that we can give a juſt repreſentation of his lordſhip's logical abilities: for he would be thought to reaſon through all his works, through which it would be tedious to follow him; and perhaps, in the main, unneceſſary; as his arts of controverſy are much the ſame on the different ſubjects and occaſions he has employed them; ſo that, though to anſwer all his arguments and objections (where they might juſtly and reaſonably call for an anſwer, for many of them have been ſufficiently confuted) would be a work of labour; yet his me-

thod of objecting and argumentation, may be comprized and expoſed in a leſſer compaſs.

Still amidſt the various arts of ſophiſtry and miſrepreſentation, which his lordſhip deals in, it is not eaſy to ſelect and aſſort them, in any tolerable order and method, as he has uſed them ſo indiſcriminately, now apart, and now all together, in the different parts of his eſſays. We may be then excuſed, if we throw together our obſervations at large, and without that preciſion and connection, which his lordſhip diſdained, on the reaſoning of the Firſt Philoſophy: The noble author had indeed no ſyſtem to go by; and ſo was left to range at large, as the preſent thought or imagination prompted: he profeſſed, indeed, to make Nature his text, and Reaſon his comment; but the comment runs mad; and inſtead of that order and ſobriety, which the calm contemplation of Nature, and the juſt cultivation of Reaſon would preſent you with, he gives you an incoherent detail of his own wild and licentious opinions; and

and his lordſhip has told us, finely, as he has ſaid many things finely, "that a "rhapſody of general reflections, hud-"dled together with little order or de-"ſign, leave no ſyſtematical impreſſion "on the mind;—nothing but a confu-"ſion of ideas, often bright and glit-"tering, ſeldom inſtructive*."

From a writer prejudiced as Lord Bolingbroke will appear to be, we cannot expect, that argument and reaſon ſhould have fair play; indeed ſo violent are his paſſions, that he ſometimes pretends not to argument, but goes on without rub or heſitation, without grace or ſhame, in heaping one falſhood upon another; and gives us for a true repreſentation, what is contradicted by his own favourite and applauded authors:—an inſtance of this, you have in his lordſhip's account of Moſes and the Jews, with their migration from Egypt, compared with what Strabo has ſaid upon this ſubject. And Strabo,

* Diſſert. on Parties, p. 162.

if we may believe his lordſhip, "had no "prejudices to biaſs him, no particular "cauſe to defend, nor ſyſtem of ancient "hiſtory to eſtabliſh, and all the helps, "as well as talents, to make him a "competent judge *."

But his lordſhip did not always, as a Philoſopher ought to do, conſult his reaſon alone; he let imagination warm, and paſſion tranſport him, and thence, according to his own juſt account of the natural conſequence, "he had with all "his knowledge, and all his reaſon, not "his own whimſies alone, but thoſe of "the moſt vulgar underſtanding to ſup-"port †."

He catches at appearances, and rarely enters into a thorough examination and diſcuſſion of things: ſuch is the power of his genius, that he can transform imaginations into facts, and dreſs up falſehood with all the borrowed colours,

* Letters on Hiſt. vol. 1. p. 79. (V. Strabo, p. 523.)

† Vol. 1. p. 161.

and

and then puſh her upon the ſtage, with all the confidence of truth. An opinion he diſlikes, he can load with abſurdities, real or ſeeming, as he can clear up all the wild notions he adopts, to make the one appear reaſonable, the other ridiculous. He often extorts a concluſion, which has no natural connexion with the premiſes; and attempts to expoſe an opinion, from the abſurdities, which he, or ſome paradoxical writer for him, has unneceſſarily annexed to it. His lordſhip, in his Letters on Hiſtory, abuſes Bodin in the lump, for two pages together, and as a ſpecimen of his abilities, gives us, as I imagine, one of the greateſt abſurdities to be found in his book; though not long after, our critic condeſcends to be of Bodin's mind *.

Thus, in his laboured efforts againſt the immortality of the ſoul, he has choſe out ſome of the moſt ridiculous ſuppoſitions, and paſſed over the moſt ſolid arguments in defence of this article; as

* Lett. on Hiſt. p. 136.

where

where he repreſents it, as the opinion of ſome, that it (the ſoul) "has a principal "reſidence in the pineal gland, or in "that part of the brain, where, I have "read, there is a ſort of nervous juice, "the ſource of animal ſpirits, of a moſt "fragrant ſmell." His lordſhip ſeems here to have been dabbling in the whimſies of Dodwell, who would have us believe, that the ſoul, or πνευμα, is material, like the ſteams of odoriferous bodies:—an opinion, as Dr. Clarke well obſerves, more like the raillery of an unbeliever, than the reaſoning of one, that in earneſt intended to eſtabliſh any conſiſtent notion *,

Thus again, let a whimſical commentator, or viſionary philoſopher, pretend to find what is no where expreſſed, or deduce, what is not fairly deducible, from the ſacred text, and the Bible is a forgery, the believers of it, impious, if not blaſphemous; and a crude, miſapprehended obſervation on the Moſaic law,

* Letter to Dodwell, p. 32.

made

made by later writers, muſt deſtroy the authority of Moſes. If a modern Cabaliſt dreams, the ancient Jews were all dotards; and the incarnation of the Word may be fabulous, becauſe Pagan theology was ſhocking. — Let a weak argument be advanced, or an error maintained by a Chriſtian writer, he thence equitably infers, that Chriſtianity itſelf is falſe; nay, though the writer has only ſo far departed from truth, as he has loſt ſight of Revelation. If the author of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, is caught in an unwary expreſſion, then you are left to infer, that Chriſtianity itſelf is falſe! If Abbadie, Jaquelet, or Huetius, is guilty of a miſtake, the law is falſe and futile: or let his lordſhip but expoſe Maimonides, or the Miſna, and he would have you believe, he has confuted Moſes. Our noble author little conſidered, that by this method of proceeding, he betrays his own cauſe, and the Firſt Philoſophy is undone.

Nothing

Nothing is more common with his lordſhip, than to produce the infirmities of men, in order to diſgrace the truths of God: With what keenneſs does he catch hold of, and expoſe to public view, the dreams of a Jewiſh Rabbi, in order to traduce the hiſtory of Moſes: or the eaſy faith, and pious credulity of a Chriſtian father, in order to render ſuſpected the authenticity of the goſpel Revelation. Quaint allegories and whimſical alluſions of the fathers brought by them ex abundantiâ, to confirm or illuſtrate an undiſputed truth, are alledged by his lordſhip, to render the truth itſelf diſputable, as if it had no other proof but ſuch allegories and alluſions.

To miſrepreſent a fact or opinion, is to confute and deſtroy it; as to abuſe an adverſary, is, with lord Bolingbroke, to anſwer him. He frequently gives you a reflection upon the perſon of an antagoniſt, which you are to take for a confutation of his principles; as he ſometimes paſſes upon his readers an inſinuation

tion for a proof, and a hint for a demonſtration: he draws general actions from particular facts; and his concluſions have often no manner of connexion with his premiſes. Nay ſo far have prejudice and paſſion tranſported him, that he has without fear or ſhame, practiſed that very chicane, ſophiſtry, and inconſiſtency, which he could ſo eaſily diſcern, and has with ſpirit and proper indignation ſometimes expoſed in others. He ſubſtitutes eloquence for reaſon: wit is his frequent method of conviction; and an alluſion well managed and dreſſed up (at which he has an admirable hand) is to ſtand for irrefragable evidence.

What is poſſible, is advanced for probable; and what is probable, is obtruded upon you with the air of demonſtration. He has more of ſubtilty than preciſion: he mangles truth; he diſguiſes falſehood; and ſometimes without ceremony or conſcience, he boldly denies the former, and advances the latter. An ambiguous or indifferent expreſſion of one writer is maliciouſly catched hold of, invidiouſly produced,

produced, and prepoſterouſly wreſted, to invalidate the direct arguments, which the ſame writer has produced in confirmation of religion, and which are not the leaſt affected by the cited expreſſion, nor attempted to be confuted by his lordſhip: as the reported ſcepticiſm of a great prelate, when he came to die, is given us for a great truth, and with a peculiar poignancy of wit, to ſet aſide all the learned labours of his life, in defence of the truth; though upon other occaſions, the confeſſion of a martyr is of no weight or conſideration; but a dying infidel is, to be ſure, of unqueſtionable credit and authority.

When he is hard preſt by an argument, which he cannot anſwer, he knows how to evade it: when he is at a loſs for proofs, he gives you alluſions: where facts are againſt him, he ſuggeſts his ſuſpicions to the contrary, and ſets poſſibility againſt probability; whilſt from his adverſaries he requires, what is not poſſible, in order to authenticate

what

what is probable: and of ſuch unrelenting mettle is this champion in the field of controverſy, that upon occaſion he ſatisfies himſelf, and would ſatisfy his reader, with boldly affirming what he cannot prove, and boldly denying what he cannot refute. — He frequently evades what he cannot anſwer; alters the ſtate of the queſtion, and after a ſly ſubterfuge out of the hands of his enemies, proclaims himſelf entire victor! Thus he is to prove againſt the divines, and their Bible, that the moral attributes of goodneſs and juſtneſs belong not to God: — and this he does by proving, that temperance and fortitude cannot have place in the ſupreme Being; which neither the Bible, nor any divine that I have heard of, ever maintained.

Nay, to ſo ſtrong a prejudice had he wrought up his underſtanding, as to convert thoſe very circumſtances, which made for, and were neceſſary to the truth of an hiſtorical narration, arguments of its falſehood, abſurdity, or impoſſibility.

Thus he makes it an objection to the hiſtory of Moſes, that he there obſerves a ſyſtem of nature very different from the preſent, and that all he meets with is repugnant to his experience. Wherein, we may aſk, does this different ſyſtem and want of experience, objected by his lordſhip, conſiſt? It ſhould ſeem to regard the courſe of nature, the fortunes and manners of men, or the adminiſtration of God, reſpecting the ſubjects of the Moſaic hiſtory. Now as to the firſt, it will not, I conceive, be ſaid, that the Bible holds out to us another ſun, other elements, a different ſummer or winter, ſeed-time or harveſt, than have been experienced in later ages: and the peculiarities aſcribed to ſoil, and climate, are ſuch as do not detract from, but confirm and eſtabliſh the truth of the hiſtory.—As to men, their fortunes, manners and paſſions, theſe are and muſt be the ſame in every age and climate, abating for that peculiarity of complexion and character, which diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral ages and nations of the world:—for, we

we preſume, his lordſhip would not require the patriarchs to have been petit maitres: But human nature in general appears now to be the ſame it was 5000 years ago: the manners only are repreſented of old, as more ſimple and natural, the paſſions more bold and undiſguiſed, and the employments to have been of the barbarous, or rural and paſtoral kind: wars, love, flocks, and agriculture muſt neceſſarily engage the principal attention of a people, where politeneſs and humanity were uncultivated, and arts and ſciences not underſtood. And indeed this very circumſtance, I mean that original caſt and native ſimplicity, which ſo ſtrongly mark the patriarchal manners, are to me an evidence of more weight, than a thouſand external arguments, of the reality of the perſons and characters deſcribed in the ſacred hiſtory.

The objection then muſt reſpect God's adminiſtration, or providential government of the ſons of men: But we may obſerve the righteous ſometimes diſtreſ-

ſed, and the wicked proſperous; or theſe again overtaken by ſome ſignal judgment, and thoſe preſerved by ſome miraculous deliverance; and virtue and piety in general, deriving happineſs and bleſſing upon the heads of thoſe who cultivate them. I ſay, we obſerve the courſe of things to have been the ſame in this reſpect, in the times of the fathers, and our own; — the adminiſtration the ſame, and only the mode of it different; as what befalls us now, as it may ſeem by chance, or under the veil, and in the ordinary courſe of nature, is aſcribed, in this primeval hiſtory, to the viſible hand of God, or immediate agency of heaven.

Now what can we imagine more agreeable to the goodneſs of God, (which his lordſhip admits in the preceding diſcourſe, and profeſſes to adore) than that he ſhould, in a miraculous manner, imbue with the knowledge of himſelf, minds ignorant by nature, uninſtructed by experience, and untutored in ſcience? And ſhould we admit the principles, which the Philoſopher himſelf maintained

in the beginning of this very diſcourſe, —the expediency of ſuch a miraculous information would amount to a neceſſity: for he ſuppoſes, that Polytheiſm and Idolatry ſeem moſt conformable to the ideas of the firſt inhabitants of the globe.—

But with a view to enforce this objection, and in order to diſparage the laws of Moſes, he elſewhere tells us that particular puniſhments are inflicted with leſs tumult, and with better order, in conſequence of the law of Nature. We here ſee that the objection lies againſt the extraordinary interpoſitions of the Almighty, in eſtabliſhing the Moſaic law: —a circumſtance, which the more it is examined, the more it will diſplay the divine wiſdom; as no ſanctions can be conceived more proper, or cogent, for the eſtabliſhment of a new, or extraordinary diſpenſation, than ſuch an extraordinary interpoſition, and the terror and thunder of Omnipotence, appearing both in the promulgation and execution of the

law. And his lordſhip had juſt before told us, that the example of ſavage nations will ſhew, that the firſt and ſtrongeſt impreſſions of this kind (their ideas, I ſuppoſe he means, of the power and wiſdom of God) come from thence, i. e. from the works of God*. Now the Jews, according to his lordſhip, were as ignorant and ſtupid, as any other barbarous nation, and were therefore moſt properly impreſſed, awed, and influenced by an exhibition of the extraordinary power of God.

He ſometimes makes general acknowledgments, which he afterwards explains away, or denies, by denying the particulars deduceable from them.—He declaims when he would be thought to confute—obſcures, when he ſhould elucidate, and confounds when he ſhould diſtinguiſh: he would ſeem to expoſe doctrines, while he is only tedious and prolix in declaiming againſt abſurdities,

* Vol. IV. p. 19.

with

with which they have no natural connection, and triumphs in exploding acknowledged errors, when he would perſuade his reader, that he is confuting eſtabliſhed doctrines: and ſometimes he preſſes into his ſervice celebrated names, in ſupporting ſuch opinions, as they clearly and uniformly diſclaimed. He frequently makes uſe of illuminations, that give you no true light, and ſimilitudes, that convey no real likeneſs. Some general reſemblance, or one common mark, or even the appearance of it in two different ſubjects or characters, is ſufficient with his lordſhip to identify them through the whole piece. From his abundant variety of materials, he is never at a loſs to make out a lame fact by a conjecture, and to ſupport a doubtful opinion by ſome ſort of authority—to give probability to what is improbable, plauſibility to what is moſt abſurd, and colouring to what is moſt deformed and odious.

His very genius and conſtitution were inauſpicious and hurtful to his philoſophiq character:—"My memory," (ſays he, in the beginning of one of his letters to Lord Cornbury) "is refreſhed, "my imagination is warmed, and matter flows in ſo faſt upon me, that I "have not time to preſs it cloſe." Now this redundance of matter, and warmth of imagination, and precipitation to give vent to both, and to unload his crowded memory, were, I conceive, and ever muſt be impediments to cool reflection and logical preciſion; his memory, which might have been of ſuch noble uſe in the illuſtration of truth, proved a fatal inſtrument in his hands, to dreſs out and recommend falſehood. To explain what I mean:—Some great and illuſtrious character is to be defamed, or ſome notorious and uncontroverted fact to be rendered of doubtful or no authority:—but both the fact and character are too well eſtabliſhed, to yield to a direct attack by an induction of particulars, and a regular

mode

mode of confutation: here then his lordſhip's memory comes in to his relief, and ſuggeſts to him from his abundant materials, ſome fabulous tradition, or vain and pretending ſophiſt; which having ſome faint analogy, and diſtant reſemblance, are made by the power of his imagination and language, to be an exact counterpart to the character or caſe in hand. Thus the Bolingbroke of a future age may maintain Queen Elizabeth and Olive Trant to have been of the ſame rank, quality and character, becauſe they both dealt in politics, and wore petticoats.

No man has more the art or fraud, the wit or malice, of patching together ſome circumſtances, of ſeeming ſimilarity, common to both the Jewiſh and Pagan, or the Chriſtian and Pagan theology, (though nothing upon the whole could be more diſtant) and thence inferring the common falſehood of both. If the Chriſtian and the Platoniſt hold one common principle and opinion, they muſt, according to our Philoſopher,

Philoſopher, maintain it by the ſame arguments; and all the enthuſiaſtic reveries of the latter are chargeable upon the former. Thus, becauſe Marſilius Ficinus is a viſionary, all the arguments, moral and divine, for the immortality of the ſoul, are ridiculous. But ſome modern philoſophers, it ſeems, hold as dogmatical language upon the ſubject, as the founder of the Academy:—granting that they do, this affects not the other arguments of other philoſophers upon the ſame ſubject. If the ſtoical divination is abſurd, then, according to our Philoſopher, Chriſtian prophecies and Jewiſh types, ſymbols and ſigns are abominable*: and Homer's allegories being wreſted to a wrong ſenſe, is ſufficient proof, that the ſacred Scripture allegories can have no right one. This method, of ſorting under one, things of different and oppoſite kinds, was practiſed of old, and is charged by Arnobius upon the

* Vide vol. I. p. 345-6.

early

early enemies of Chriſtianity: " Diſſi-
" milia copulare, atque in unam ſpeciem
" cogere, indocta confuſione conamini*."
Yet, the ancient Pagans were ſomething more modeſt, than our modern, enlightened philoſopher: they wanted only to raiſe their own abſurd ſyſtem, to a level with the chriſtian; and from ſuppoſed ſimilar opinions, inferred, not that both were falſe, but their own was true; and thence the primitive apologiſt took occaſion to expoſtulate with his intolerant adverſary, why he would perſecute thoſe, who, by his own acknowledgment, maintained the ſame opinions, and adored the ſame ſupreme God?† — But how does the noble author deal in alluſions and analogies, that have no proportion or ſimilitude? He cenſures, and I think very juſtly, the metaphyſicians, who argue from poſſibility to actuality; and his lordſhip is not leſs abſurd, in arguing from actuality to poſſibility. Some na-

* Adv. Gentes. L. 1. p. 29. † Ditto, p. 30.

tions

tions have, through pride, falſified their annals, and given to their race an higher and diviner original, than was their right; therefore the Jews, his lordſhip infers, might do ſo. Mahomet was an impoſtor, as was Sabatai Sevi, and ſo we are left to infer, might be Moſes, and Jeſus Chriſt. The books, impoſed upon the world, by the Monk of Viterbo, were forged *; therefore the books of Moſes and Joſhua, might be forgeries. The prieſts of Delphi were credulous †; therefore prieſts of all religions are the ſame: as much as to ſay, There has been abundance of folly and falſehood, therefore there is neither truth nor wiſdom in the world.

In much of what he has ſaid ‡ concerning inſpiration, he has ſhewn little regard to decency or dignity; and can ſcarce be thought ſerious in his reaſoning on this ſubject. — In the room of argument, he has given you illiberal ſneer,

* Vol. V. p. 347. † P. 351.
‡ Vol. I. Eſſay 1. p. 170.

and

and a coarſe kind of wit, with alluſions to pagan oracles, the Pythian prieſteſs, and Mahometan pretences, and the enthuſiaſm of Methodiſts and Quakers. Sometimes ſo ſtrong was his prejudice, that he finds a likeneſs, where there was no ſimilitude: and Moſes taught the opinion of local Deities, as much as the Pagan ſage, only more abuſed and aggravated.* Terms of an acknowledged bad ſenſe in pagan writers, as Prophets and the ſons of Prophets, ſeers of viſions, and dreamers of dreams, diviners, (to which he adds Magicians and Conjurers) —and terms indifferent and innocent, as myſteries, figures, allegories, fables and parables, he uſes, he accumulates, he repeats again and again, as of the ſame ſignificance with, and expreſſive of the ſame things and characters, when applied in ſacred writ to a good ſenſe. In ſhort, he refers to inſtances and facts, that make out neither proof nor probability, and gives us ancient frauds and modern

* Vol. I. p. 317.

extra-

extravagancies, which have no reference to, or connexion with Chriſtian inſpiration: — and any other writer might as juſtly and as plauſibly have produced the moſt remarkable inſtances of faction and rebellion, to explode and ridicule the ſpirit of patriotiſm ſo highly founded, and ſo powerfully recommended, in the writings of the noble lord.

Upon this ſubject of inſpiration, as upon others, he deals in generals, when he ſhould have given clear arguments, and particular preciſe proofs. "Ignorance and fear, ſays he, produced "ſuperſtition; and ſuperſtition in its "turn maintained ignorance and fear "in the minds of men." — By ſuch vague and general language, he affects to account for, and at the ſame time to confute the opinion of inſpiration; an opinion, which has prevailed in almoſt every age and nation; and whoſe power and efficacy, in the Chriſtian church, have for their proof, particular, ſtrong, and authentic hiſtorical records, with other appearances and revolutions in the moral

moral world, in the Eaſt, — in Judea, and in other provinces of the Roman empire, never to be accounted for, without admitting inſpiration. The goats of Coreatas and their ſhepherd, are juſt as ſufficient to diſprove Chriſtian inſpiration, as Mahomet's pretended aſcenſion is to diſprove the aſcenſion of Jeſus.

The method he has taken through all his works, in ſetting in one view, and as parallels to each other, the abſurd, immoral and ſuperſtitious practices of Pagans and Chriſtians, is moſt ſophiſtical and diſingenuous; as the former acted upon principles, the principles of their religion, and the latter directly againſt them: And nothing is more manifeſt than that abſurdity, ſuperſtition, and immorality are directly deducible from the genuine principles of Paganiſm; while nothing is more eaſy than to prove the ſame abſurdity, &c. directly contradicted by the genuine principles of Chriſtianity. — And indeed his lordſhip upon other occaſions, and when he is in humour to traduce Chriſtian divines, and metaphyſicians,

ficians, is careful enough to diſtinguiſh, between their own opinions, and the principles of their religion — between genuine Chriſtianity and artificial theology.

He ſays, the Chriſtians applied to Chance, as the heathens did to Fortune, and inſtances in the Apoſtles referring to lots, the choice of a ſucceſſor to the traitor Judas: Though lord Bolingbroke could not but know, that in this laſt caſe, the appeal is expreſly and directly made to God, who knows the hearts of all men: and indeed he acknowledges ſoon after, that the Chriſtians appeal, was an appeal to the over-ruling providence of God.

Out of regard, and in honour to lord Bolingbroke's great abilities, we can ſcarce imagine, that he was in earneſt and ſeriouſly believed himſelf, in what he objected, in this looſe and invidious way of compariſon, to Chriſt, and the doctrines of Chriſtianity. The Philoſopher was a Lord, and might take liberties with his inferiors: —Thus in the gaiety of

of humour, the jollity of wit, and the pride of genius, (the diſplay of which he ſeems moſt to affect) and with ſuperior ſcorn to God and his truth, he banters, he braves, he bullies the divines, with whom he is engaged; and againſt whom he ſeems to think himſelf at liberty, to uſe every kind of arms that may do execution; ſecure and careleſs, as he was, upon his own principles and as he had ſettled his accounts, of all anſwer or detection in this, or the future world: for ſurely had he given the leaſt ſerious attention to the true hiſtory of the impoſtors and enthuſiaſts, he has alledged as parallels to Jeſus of Nazareth and his followers, he muſt have been convinced, that they were no more than ſhades, peculiarly fitted to illuſtrate the character of the Meſſiah, and the more to confirm the truth and authority of divine revelation.

But where the Philoſopher may ſeem more ſerious, he is not more ſucceſsful, or convincing in his reaſoning. "Look "into the hiſtory of the world, reve-

" rend Sir," ſays the Philoſopher to the divine, " and you will find too many " examples of pretended revelations, of " forged miracles, and of groundleſs " traditions, that have prevailed among " mankind from age to age, to leave it " in your power to think, that unexcep- " tionable revelations, real miracles, and " certain traditions, could be ever effec- " tual *." — To which the divine may reply: Look into the hiſtory of the world, my noble Lord, and you will find too many examples of the worſhip of falſe Gods, and of many Gods, that has prevailed among mankind from age to age, to leave it in your power to think, that the doctrine of the one true God could be ever effectual; and the general prevalence of pretended revelations, forged miracles, and uncertain traditions, does really detract more from, and is a ſtronger argument againſt your natural, than againſt our revealed religion; as you maintain the evidence of the former, to

* Vol. II. p. 209.

be

be in all reſpects ſuperior to that of the latter. Forged miracles, and pretended revelations, may be, as forgeries generally are, imitations founded in ſomething ſimilar and real: but all revelations, and all miracles, the belief of which has ſo univerſally prevailed, are in direct contradiction to your lordſhip's natural Theiſm. —— He allows natural religion to be corrupt and loſt. He ſays, that though God was known and worſhipped, it will not follow, that this knowledge and worſhip were preſerved, or even eſtabliſhed any where in all the purity of Theiſm; — and yet this corruption of Chriſtianity is ſuppoſed to detract from its authority. — What is probable, what is plauſible, what is poſſible, and what is actually impoſſible, — yet are in their ſeveral turns admitted to ſupport his own hypotheſis; — while nothing ſhort of demonſtration, is allowed, in ſupport of thoſe of his adverſaries.

As to his objection to divine revelation not anſwering, in its effects; we have as

good a right to object; that truth and reaſon are not the gift of God, becauſe they anſwer not in the effect: and his lordſhip, in particular, has fallen ſhort, or been wide of them in a thouſand inſtances. He might as well reproach Heaven with its bleſſings that are abuſed: to anſwer ſuch objections, as to make them, is an inſult upon common ſenſe; and they only become reſpectable by the noble hands, into which they are fallen. —But the objection againſt Chriſtianity from its inefficacy lies ſtill ſtrongeſt againſt his own natural religion, which, according to his own principles, excludes from the belief of its profeſſors, the great articles of God's providence, and moral attributes, with the ſoul's immortality, and a future ſtate, and all ſupernatural or extraordinary revelation from heaven: yet men have, in contradiction to what his lordſhip calls the clear dictates of Nature, believed in all theſe: And ſo far revelation, ſuppoſing it true, has obtained its effect, as to gain general credit

to

to itſelf, and its moſt important doctrines —God's moral government, and a future ſtate:—whereas his natural religion has every where fallen ſhort in its effects, in proportion as theſe doctrines have prevailed; and perhaps as they have in ſome degree prevailed in every age and nation of the world, his natural religion cannot be ſaid to have ever had its proper effect, or at leaſt any eſtabliſhment among mankind, and muſt therefore be allowed to have no authority, as having generally, if not univerſally failed, and fallen ſhort of the intention of the author and giver of it.

Ancient traditions, and the broken fragments of antiquity, that prove nothing for the orthodox, are ſufficient authority, to ſupport his own hypotheſis.

There is not an art, which he more practiſes, than to catch hold of ſome weak or ſingular opinion, of ſome Platoniſt or Chriſtian divine, to exaggerate and render it more ridiculous, and thence to infer the futility and falſehood of both.

He extends, in order to expoſe the opinions of his adverſaries, and ſometimes charges upon divines and theologians at large, what every ſenſible and honeſt man of the profeſſion diſclaims: he palliates, or aggravates the errors of the ancient philoſophers, as may ſerve his own purpoſe; whether to confirm his own, or to ſet in a ridiculous light, the principles of his antagoniſts. If he finds a miſtake, or what he may perhaps only imagine one, in a Chriſtian advocate, though it may be no more than like a ſtraggling party from the main body, he plumes himſelf upon it, and affects to triumph, as if he had demoliſhed every fort, and ruined the whole ſtrength of his adverſaries. Thus he affects to confute Mr. Locke upon one point, and then we may ſuppoſe that the author of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, is to be believed in nothing. But how does he here confute his maſter? Mr. Locke had ſaid, that the unity of the Godhead was unknown to the Gentile world; or words to this effect; and in proof

of

of what he aſſerts, he appeals to the ſtate of ignorance among the Athenians, an acute and philoſophical people, in the times of Socrates and St. Paul.—How does the noble lord anſwer this?—Why, by telling us, that the unity of God, and the acknowledgment of a plurality of Gods, were very conſiſtent: and that though the true God might not be known in Greece, yet he was acknowledged in Egypt,—" in times remote and unknown to us," and in the myſteries.

Suppoſe all this true, though the friends of Mr. Locke have here a fair occaſion to vindicate his name and his arguments; yet if idolatry and polytheiſm prevailed ſo groſsly, as they did in the periods we know, and in the days of Saint Paul; was a religion that taught the worſhip of the one true God in ſpirit and in truth, the Creator of heaven and earth, therefore not proper or reaſonable? The Theban dynaſty, according to his lordſhip, was the laſt ſtage of orthodox faith, and of natural religion, in Egypt: and do the abſence of this faith,

and the extinction of this religion for ſo long a period, imply the no neceſſity and unreaſonableneſs of their being ever revived? Or do not the very long ſucceeding ignorance, ſuperſtition and idolatry of the Egyptians and other nations call aloud for aſſiſtance more than mortal, to revive what might otherwiſe be loſt irrecoverably?——

He takes advantage of conceſſions made, and objections which are allowed a place in the defenders of revelation, without the leaſt regard had, to the anſwers given to ſuch objections and conceſſions. Thus he ſolemnly urges the thirty thouſand various readings in the New Teſtament; but paſſes over in perfect ſilence the anſwer given, and to be found in the ſame book, where he found the objection, viz. that not one of theſe various readings affects the ſenſe of the original text, in any point of moment. And indeed while he affects to anſwer the moſt eminent defenders of Chriſtianity, he paſſes over in ſilence, or very ſlightly and ſuperficially mentions the beſt arguments they have

have advanced in its defence. He demands ſuch evidence for the authenticity of the Goſpel, as is in the nature of things impoſſible, and which, if granted, would, upon his own principles, be incompetent. The evidence we have, is abundantly ſufficient for rational conviction: the Philoſopher ſeems to know it, and therefore ſuppoſes,—this enemy to hypothetical reaſoning in others ſuppoſes, that there might be old objections we have now loſt, and which might have counterbalanced the remaining evidence: though his lordſhip could not but know, that the objections urged with all the learning, wit and malice, of Julian and Celſus, are ſtill preſerved to us in the writings of Cyrill and Origen. The authority and authenticity of traditional opinions, ſuppoſed to confirm, or accord with his own, however conveyed, or derived from antiquity more remote by many hundred, if not ſome thouſand years than the Goſpel, is allowed, or inſiſted upon: but the ſupport of traditional opinions, concerning the doctrines of revelation, depends,

depends, he tells us, on human authority, and a decreaſing probability*.

His lordſhip is not always orderly, and regular in his method, but extravagant and a rambler; and ſometimes tempted by vanity, and ſometimes by malice, to exceed in his reflections on perſons and things, beyond the proper bounds of his ſubject. He had large materials: his head was full, and ſo was his heart; and as he ſeems to have ſate down with a deſign to write himſelf off, ſo he omits no occaſion to let his reader ſee, how much he knew, or what or whom he hated. And he may ſometimes ſeem to have choſe the paradoxical ſide of a queſtion, for no other reaſon, but that it gave more room for the diſplay of his reading and railing, than he could have found in the road of plain and eſtabliſhed truth; —whoſe doctors and defenders he could not ſo well have traduced and refuted, had he adopted their principles: though even this inconſiſtent and ungrateful

* Vol. II. p. 279.

part

part he has ſometimes acted, and may be found upon occaſion much obliged to thoſe, whom he has much abuſed.

He condemns both Moſes and Plato, as makers of worlds; and to expoſe ſuch blunderers, he modeſtly gives us a ſpecimen of his own ingenuity in the art: he further anſwers Des Cartes, and Dr. Burnet, but withal takes much pains, to reconcile us in ſome degree to the maſter of the Charter-Houſe. The extravagant digreſſion he enters upon, and the wild imagination he indulges, concerning the manner and proceſs of nature in the work of creation, is the more inexcuſeable in him, as it has not only no connection with his ſubject, brings no ſupport to his argument, or credit to his cauſe; but as it is more hypothetical and precarious, more particular and preſumptuous, and more derogatory from the attributes of God, than any ſyſtem he has cenſured.—But he had his reaſons, and ſeems to be all this while labouring, to diſplay his own, and not the genius of Nature. In Moſes his account of the creation,

creation, you obſerve the whole aſcribed to the Fiat of the Almighty: in the Philoſopher's ſyſtem you ſcarce perceive the God appear. Lord Bolingbroke regulating the heavens and the earth, ſtationing the planets, directing the elements, and conducting the productions of nature to their birth and maturity, is the principal figure in the piece. If it be ſaid, that he has abandoned the hypotheſis here objected to him, or at leaſt the principles with which he would ſeem to connect it, we may aſk, why does he ſtill maintain what he profeſſes to abandon, and publiſh to the world, what he avowedly condemns; unleſs he thought his very errors reſpectable, and that the merit of his abilities, as a writer, were more than ſufficient to atone for his want of conſiſtency and truth, as a philoſopher and a man.

Sometimes the philoſopher is more ſhy and upon his guard, in his objections; for though he is generally clear, unneceſſarily diffuſe, and full of repeti-

tions;

tions; yet upon occaſion he is in haſte, and affectedly obſcure: as where he is conſcious of his deficiency upon any ſubject, and that he may be right, or he may be wrong, he ſtops ſhort, gives you ſome general thought, a hint, a faint analogy, or invidious compariſon, inſtead of an argument, and an inſinuation for a proof. But when under difficulties to explain himſelf at all, upon a dubious point, which may expoſe him to objections, and a confutation, he is modeſtly ſilent, and contents himſelf with acquainting the reader, "that he knows what he means."

However for this ſhyneſs he makes you much amends, whenever he thinks he has any advantage over an opponent; for he lets it not ſlip, or ſlightly overlooks it. He ſpreads it out at large, comments, illuſtrates, enforces, repeats, recapitulates, confirms, decides, without leaving any thing to the ſenſe and judgment of the reader: and ſometimes, when he cannot diſprove the principles, he

he is laviſh enough in abuſing the perſon of an adverſary:—not that he is always ſparing in giving you the replies, that have been made to infidel objections; but then his frankneſs in this, is to ſtand for an anſwer to thoſe replies, and for a preſumption, that he would not ſo boldly confront his adverſaries, was he not conſcious of his ſuperiority, or did he not know effectually how to confound them; though this he ſeldom regularly attempts, notwithſtanding his profeſſions, and the apparatus he makes; but contents himſelf with a ſneer or abuſive terms, thrown upon his opponents, whom he commonly leaves, in the poſſeſſion of their ſtrength, and their arguments.

Generally, however, he profeſſes great things, and ſets himſelf with much parade and a formal declaration, to the analyſe, the examination, or defence of this or that;—of Chriſtianity, for inſtance; or to the confutation of ſome doctor, or philoſopher of name and note, in the chriſtian world; and when your expectations are raiſed, and you are intent upon the

the ſolemn entrance, the clear proceſs, and full and final deciſion of the whole debate, you are ſcarce permitted a ſide-glance of the queſtion propoſed, but are put off with the old run of miſcellaneous reflections, ſceptical doubts, unconnected thoughts, and general declamations againſt perſons and things.

A more boaſtful champion never entered the liſts of controverſy, nor a more harmleſs aſſailant. He rarely cloſes with his adverſary; but raiſes up ſome phantom of his own imagination, which the ſpectator is to ſuppoſe the real enemy; and by defeating this, or braving it out in words, without argument, he proclaims himſelf conqueror. Obſerve, for inſtance, how he baffles Clarke: the divine had produced the ſentiments of Plato, or rather of Socrates, in atteſtation of human ignorance, and the want of a better light and higher information, in the duty which man owes to God:—the teſtimony produced is full and clear. What ſays his lordſhip to this?—Why, that the want

was

was imaginary; and thus by confronting Socrates, he would be thought to confute Clarke.

He often takes for granted the queſtion in debate, and ſometimes puts upon his adverſary, as maintained by him, a falſehood for a truth; and after this, charges him with abſurd conſequences, from an abſurd poſtulatum of his own framing. This he has done remarkably, in ſuppoſing that the Meſſias gave no inſtructions to his Apoſtles, about taking in the Gentiles into the church: "Shall we ſay," expoſtulates his lordſhip, "that this "eternal purpoſe of the Father, was un-"known to the Son? We ſhall blaſ-"pheme, if we do: — Shall we ſay, "that it was known to him, but that he "neglected to communicate it to the "firſt preachers of his Goſpel, and gave "them imperfect inſtructions? The "prophanation will be little leſs." — Whereas, both the blaſphemy, and the prophanation will have no place, had his lordſhip but allowed, what is the obvious truth, that this eternal purpoſe of the Father

Father was known to the Son, and by him communicated to the firſt preachers of the Goſpel.

His lordſhip often catches at the appearance of an objection; as knowing, that there are readers to be taken with appearances, and who want either the abilities, or the inclination, to go to the bottom of a ſubject. He frequently and maliciouſly confounds the comment and the text; — infers This to be fictitious or falſe, becauſe That is trifling or abſurd; and with the meaneſt artifice, quotes ſome ſingular opinion of a Jewiſh, or Chriſtian writer, which has no foundation in the Bible, and thence would expoſe Judaiſm and Chriſtianity *.

He ſometimes lays hold of the letter of the text, with honeſt ſcorn, and plain contempt, of what may be the ſenſe; and as abſurdity, or the appearance of it, is all he ſeeks in the Scriptures, though he impoſes both upon himſelf, and his

* Vol. III. p. 71.

reader, in the quotations he makes, the end is anſwered. An ancient fact occurs, or opinion is referred to, peculiar to the times, when it was tranſacted, or received:—Abſurd! exclaims his lordſhip: for it ſquares not with his modern notions and experience. Nay, a tranſlation, though wrong, is ſometimes produced, to diſcredit the original text:— or an original text quoted, to prove what it does not imply: thus he ſuppoſes *, that beaſts were, by the hiſtory and law of Moſes, repreſented and treated as accountable creatures, (his lordſhip has gone far to perſuade us, that they are reaſonable creatures) and to ſupport his ſuppoſition, cites ſuch texts, as make nothing to the purpoſe. He might, with equal juſtice, have inferred, that Draco eſteemed the ſtatues, which he baniſhed, or made it criminal for any one to keep, after they had accidentally killed a man, accountable and moral agents †.

* Vol. IV. p. 6, 7.

† Vi, Plut. Solon. Vol. p. 342.

What

What proves, even the truth and ſincerity of Chriſtian writers, as St. Paul's mentioning the inceſtuous perſon, is adduced to diſcredit Chriſtianity †: for his lordſhip deals with the New, as he has done with the Old Teſtament; that is, he would have neither paſs for authentic, but where ſomething is related to the ſuppoſed diſhonour of Jews or Chriſtians, whoſe abſurdity or impiety is always admitted, though no other part of the ſacred code be.

Thus, he cannot find the great events recorded in the ſacred hiſtory, confirmed or atteſted by any parallel paſſages, or traditions, of heathen antiquity: but he can infer, without a doubt, from dark, imperfect and broken ſcraps, that the moſt ancient heathen divines held the ſame doctrines (though nothing is ſo difficult at other times as the tradition of doctrines) of the Trinity, as the latter ſchool-men; becauſe this ſerves him to

† Vol. III. p. 179.

ridicule both. Nay, Chriſtianity itſelf is admitted, not only for true, but for divine, becauſe this gives him occaſion, to expoſe the blaſphemy and preſumption of thoſe, who have altered or added to it.

He diſtinguiſhes properly between the uſe and abuſe of any thing; as of hiſtory, for inſtance, the abuſe of which, he tells us, may render us mere antiquaries and ſcholars; — or help to make us forward coxcombs, and prating pedants; "but "this is not the fault of hiſtory *." Thus too he diſtinguiſhes againſt Bayle, and the academicians, between the uſe and abuſe of reaſon: and yet quite through his philoſophical works, he makes the ſubſequent abuſe of an original truth, or inſtitution in religion, an argument againſt its primitive uſe and authenticity. Devotees have been extravagant, therefore all devotion is ſuperſtition. Pretenders to prophecy have been falſe, and enthuſiaſts delirious; therefore all prophecy is a dream, and inſpiration madneſs.

* Letters on Hiſtory, Vol. 1. p. 57.

According

According to this method of declaiming, we muſt deny the uſe of chemiſtry, becauſe it degenerated into alchymy: — of aſtronomy, becauſe it gave occaſion to judicial aſtrology; and of phyſics, becauſe they were applied to theurgic and natural magic: nay, we muſt deny and reject his pure and plain religion of Nature, becauſe it has been converted into various ſyſtems, of plain and almoſt blaſphemous doctrines, of abſurd myſteries, and ſuperſtitious rites *.

It is true, his lordſhip has diſtinguiſhed ſometimes juſtly, between the Goſpel, and the abuſe of it; — between the revelation of God, and the inventions of men: but what of that? At other times, all, both the original, and the additions, are falſehood and forgery; and without ceremony and heſitation, he aſcribes all the miſerable conſequences, flowing from artificial theology, to the exiſtence of genuine Chriſtianity.

* Vol. I. p. 153.

Another inſtance of his diſtinguiſhing and confounding in the ſame manner, you have, where he expreſſes his aſtoniſhment; "that a religion revealed by "God himſelf, taught by himſelf, in "one country, and propagated through "a great part of the world, by perſons "commiſſioned by him, as well as aſ-"ſiſted ſupernaturally by the Holy "Ghoſt, ſhould continue more than "1700 years in a flux ſtate*." And to thoſe who anſwer this objection by aſſerting, that all the important points of Chriſtianity, and every thing made neceſſary to ſalvation, are fixed and clear, he replies, "the aſſertion is evidently "falſe, when it is applied to theologi-"cal, however true it would be, if it "were applied to Goſpel Chriſtianity."

We may well indeed be aſtoniſhed, that theological Chriſtianity or the doctrines of men, being uncertain, ſhould be produced as a proof, that Goſpel-

* Vol. III. p. 54.

Chriſtianity,

Chriſtianity, or the revelation of God, is alſo flux and uncertain, which with the ſame breath he aſſerts, is not ſo.

His diſingenuity is moſt remarkable, quite through his writings, wherein you frequently find, any weak expreſſion, miſtake, or paradox in opinion, or foible in practice, culled out from the life or writings of men, diſtinguiſhed by their general conduct, for learning and piety; and expoſed to ridicule, in order, indirectly, to expoſe Chriſtianity, though it has no connexion with the particular opinion or practice, except to rectify the obliquity of both. What, though Juſtin made a miſtake in a point of literature, Irenæus a fanciful interpretation; Cyprian had his viſions and dreams; — Ambroſe was ſuperſtitious, Auſtin credulous, and Jerom a falſe zealot: — Is Goſpel-Chriſtianity thereby affected? Yes, juſt as much as his lordſhip's religion of nature is, by the knaves and fools that abound in the world. The ſentiments or practices of men are moſt

unfairly, not to ſay impudently produced, to diſgrace, when they manifeſtly contradict, the truths of God.

In all that he has objected, againſt the avarice and ambition of the Chriſtian clergy, he has ſaid nothing to the purpoſe (though we are well aware of his aim) againſt the Chriſtian religion. 'Tis human paſſion alone, that he is combating, or the corruptions, ariſing from the common fund of human nature; and which have no manner of connexion with religion, whether it appears in miniſters of ſtate, or miniſters of the church; and 'tis the higheſt diſingenuity and malice to charge upon a particular body of men, as peculiar to them, what is common to human nature in general, and what the Chriſtian religion expreſly forbids, and is fitted, if ſincerely embraced, entirely to eradicate *. His lordſhip ſeems here, to have forgot his friend Humphrey Oldcaſtle, who aſcribes

* Vide Bol. vol. III. p. 64, 5, 6,

not

not civil conteſts to law and Goſpel, but to private ambition, under the plauſible veil of Law and Goſpel; and his lordſhip knew well (no man better) to diſtinguiſh between the efforts of faction, and the fruits of genuine liberty; though the former are maſked under the veil of the latter.

His lordſhip's triumphs, over the dreams of the Talmudiſts and Rabbins, are weak and unmanly; but when pointed, by way of inſinuation, againſt the ſacred writings of the Jews, diſingenuous, and at beſt, contemptible and abſurd. Yet he has very carefully retailed the extravagancies of both Chriſtian heretics and Jewiſh cabaliſts, as reflecting upon Jews and Chriſtians in general. The phrenſies of particulars are recited, from whence you are to conclude, that all are mad: for ſurely, this aſſertor of original Goſpel-Chriſtianity did not mean to republiſh or eſtabliſh it, or to obliterate, by ſo careful and laboured a recital, all the abſurdities and

herefies of ſucceeding times. It is true, they ſhew in a ſtrong light, the ſimplicity of the primitive faith, and had his lordſhip's labours been, by the contraſt, to illuſtrate and recommend this, we had owed him more thanks, than we think ourſelves obliged to pay, for his diſingenuous proceeding, pretending to lop off the luxuriant, extravagant branches, while we ſee his arm levelled thereby, to wound and deſtroy the root.

Every ſilly ſtory, or ſcandalous imputation, laid to the charge of any ſect of Chriſtians, he is careful to pick up and retail to his readers, though he affects to diſbelieve it, and cenſures the firſt authors: — "They were ſcandals laid to "the charge of heretics, and which to "be ſure, if we had the apologies of "thoſe heretics, we ſhould find, they "could juſtify, or excuſe, by the exam-"ples of the orthodox." — How probable, and plauſible, and pious, is this good lord's defence of the primitive heretics! — of whoſe enormities, un-

juſtly charged, in juſtice and charity to the dead, he will not be the trumpeter; but as he might thereby, without evidence, accuſe the orthodox *.

In ſome places, it muſt be confeſſed, that he affects a vindication of, and zeal for Chriſtianity; (for what reaſon, God alone knows; for credit with man, upon the ſubject, he could not and would not expect, and fear of God or man, he ſhould ſeem to entertain none, that could induce him to the expreſſion) — he ſpeaks well of the duties, and of the doctrines of Chriſtianity; and the paſſages where he has declared his approbation of this diſpenſation, taken together, and ſeparately from others, were of weight and authority from ſo eminent an hand, did he not at other times inſinuate, as far as invention, wit, or malice could aſſiſt him, to the diſcredit of revelation in general, and of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian, in particular; and heſitates not, in giving his ſentiments, in ſo

* Vol. III. p. 102, &c.

frank

frank a way, as not eaſily to be miſtaken, that he believes not a word of either; and the maſk of the Chriſtian, which he may ſeem to put on, is ſo thin, and ſometimes ſo ludicrous, that we may preſume, he intended all ſhould ſee through it, if not laugh at it, and the wit of the wearer. There is, however, ſomething of inſincerity in ſuch a conduct as this (of commending what we condemn, and recommending and rejecting the ſame thing) which we could not tell how to account for, did not the examples of both the dead and the living inform us, that an infidel is not ſhackled by any forms, or ſcruples, and can occaſionally, and outwardly conform to any thing, without deſerting his principles, or burthening his conſcience.

But perhaps his lordſhip was, upon this occaſion, acting the politician more than the patriot; and gave the world this ſeeming approbation of truth, in order to gain admittance to his bolder falſehoods: and his juſt diſtinction between the objects of faith and reaſon, of revealed

revealed and natural knowledge, and the diſtinct provinces of the divine and the philoſopher, was, to procure credit to his inconſiſtency, where he condemns all the ſuppoſed objects of divine faith, as not falling in, within the precincts of natural knowledge, and not conformable to the ideas of human reaſon.

What has involved his lordſhip in ſo many errors, and ſo many inconſiſtencies and contradictions, is, that beſides his ground was naturally bad, he took too large a compaſs to defend, or however attempted too much upon his enemies; who were too numerous, as well as too firmly armed, to be ſubdued by one aſſailant, however diſtinguiſhed by his perſonal abilities, or ſupported by foreign auxiliaries: for while he puſhes too far, and directs his whole ſtrength againſt one party, he lays himſelf open, and gives advantage to another.—The very forts, he has found it ſometimes neceſſary to erect in his own defence, are forced, and turned againſt him: ſometimes while he would gall his

enemy, ſuch is his ſituation, he wounds himſelf: and ſometimes his auxiliaries, being ſome of them neutrals, and others forced into his ſervice, betray or deſert him, and go over to his enemies: Again, being hard preſſed, he is obliged to practiſe the very wiles and artifice he has condemned, and to aſſume the arms he has proſcribed:—And thus ſtinkpots are thrown with a profuſion little becoming the dignity or delicacy of the noble lord. Sometimes he is ſo ſtraitned by two different parties, that his own forces run foul one upon another; and again, he makes ſuch fair conceſſions, in favour of the cauſe of his adverſaries, as renders his oppoſition moſt unjuſtifiable and inexcuſeable! He now affects to fight, while he does but make a flouriſh, and keep aloof; and now he would be thought invulnerable, while by the powerful charm of ſome magic words, he throws a cloud around him, and only becomes inviſible. With a more moderate appetite for fame, he had been a

more

more illuſtrious hero; and nothing but an unbounded ambition, and the plan of univerſal conqueſt, have manifeſted the weakneſs of his efforts, and principally expoſed him to diſgrace: while fighting under the banner of Chriſt, againſt the corruptions of chriſtianity in general, and thoſe of the church of Rome in particular——againſt ſchool-ſubtilties and artificial theology, he ſhews an invincible ſtrength; but when changing ſides, he leads on and oppoſes corruptions, eſtabliſhed in direct contradiction to the ſpirit, and to the letter of the Goſpel, againſt Chriſtianity, he ſhews a moſt contemptible weakneſs.*

* Vide vol. II. p. 316, 323-4-6.

SECTION VI.

THE philoſopher's inconſiſtencies, which make a conſiderable figure in his poſthumous works, properly belong to, and ſhould have had a place in our remarks on his reaſoning: but to give breath to the reader, and prevent his diſguſt, we only ſelect a few of them, and make them the ſubject of a ſeparate ſection.

On this occaſion I might be drawn into a large field of obſervation, and might be led from ſide to ſide, or from one end of the Firſt Philoſophy to the other, ſhould I attempt to do juſtice to his lordſhip's character on this head: but it is ſome comfort, that his contradictions are often ſo near each other, that they need not be pointed out, or expoſed; whilſt his fallacies and falſehoods are ſo crowded, that you are ſcarce clear of one, before you are encountered with another; and they are ſo palpable, that you are in little danger of being impoſed upon, and are

ſtaggered

ſtaggered at nothing ſo much, as that the writer could ſo groſly, and ſo frequently impoſe upon himſelf. In the ſame page, you have ſometimes two or three falſehoods; and what is more, falſehoods that contradict each other; never author ſhewing ſo groſs a contempt for truth, and the opinion of the world.——Or perhaps he truſted to the indolence or ignorance of his readers, as he ſeems not to ſuſpect, that they had either memory or judgment, to compare this paragraph with the preceding:—or great wits may affect to have bad memories, and expect to be indulged, in ſaying, as the reverie dictates, one thing to-day, and another to-morrow—His lordſhip ſays, and unſays ſo much, according to the preſent opinion he is maintaining, or the ſuppoſed abſurdity he is confuting, that he frequently loſes both himſelf and reader; and we can ſcarce believe it is the ſame Lord Bolingbroke, who affirms in this place what he denies in that:—But this is no new thing in nature, and in man; who through pride

and paſſion, will affirm, what when let alone, and grown cool, he forgets or retracts.*

What run the philoſopher into endleſs contradiction was his vanity, and aſſumed ſuperior abilities. He had to face about and engage every famed champion in literature, ancient and modern; and ſo far as calumny went, it was eaſy enough to confute them all in the ſame way; but unhappily for the philoſopher, he ſometimes condeſcended to reaſon, as well as to rail; and having not only different, but oppoſite ſyſtems and opinions to combat, he was obliged to a frequent change of armour; and what was proof againſt one enemy, he was obliged to lay aſide as uſeleſs, and without either weight or edge, againſt another; as what is true in arguing againſt Mr. de Pouilly, is acknowledged to be chimerical, when he has to anſwer Archbiſhop Tillotſon. Sometimes himſelf

* See Lord Lauderdale's character in Burnet's Hiſtory of his own Times, vol. I.

aſſumes

assumes the very principles he had condemned in one antagonist, in order to defeat another; nay, he can with the same adversaries, as the state of the question alters, assert there are not, and demonstrate that there are moral attributes in God. Thus in confuting others, he frequently confutes himself, and is most absurd, in exposing other men's absurdities. The character and conduct of Bayle, as given us by Leibnitz, is in this respect exactly agreeable to that of our philosopher. "Quicquid adversario, quîcum in præsenti digladiabatur, vexando idoneum, vastissima memoria, ingeniumque suggerebat, id in usum suum convertebat, scilicet, cruci philosophis figendæ, & imbecillitati humanæ demonstrandæ, unice intentus. Nec ab Arcesilao ipso, aut Carneade, majori cum eloquentiæ ingeniique ad paratu, utramque contradictionis partem propugnatam fuisse arbitror*."

* Leibn. Theodic. p. 1130.

His lordſhip frequently plays with the divine attributes, as he pleaſes: the moral are generally and preremptorily denied;—or abſorbed in the natural:—and ſometimes they are all abſorbed in the Wiſdom; yet, upon occaſion, his maſter Locke is preſumptuous, and impertinent in aſcribing That to infinite wiſdom, which might be the effect of infinite power*. And though he is clear and poſitive, that God is not good or juſt, as we conceive of goodneſs and juſtice; yet his great objection to the Moſaic law, is, that it repreſents the ſupreme Being, as unjuſt and cruel; and then Mr. Locke, the Jews, and all who believe their hiſtory, believe of God, what is inconſiſtent with his "moſt obvious perfections†."

He accuſes both the Law of Moſes, and of Chriſt, as inadequate, and not anſwering the end of their inſtitution, and conſequently not of God‡. Reaſon

* Vol. IV. p. 249. † Vol. IV. p. 153.
‡ Vide vol. IV. p. 155-6, and 161-2.

has

has been "always" controuled, natural religion and natural law have been "almoſt "entirely ſuppreſſed in every ſociety:" he allows all mankind to have gone aſtray from the law of Nature, which he ſays is the law of Reaſon, and yet maintains it to be of God.

He pleads for the ſame law of reaſon, being the immutable rule of moral agency, from the immutability of God, and of the nature of things; and yet he would be thought to enlarge, and to have others do ſo, in admiration of the divine wiſdom, from the new diſcoveries made in nature and the ſyſtem of the univerſe. Our devotion to God, it ſeems, may be improved, from the late manifeſtation of his wiſdom in his works; but he denies it poſſible, that our duty ſhould be improved by any later manifeſtations of his will. Again, notwithſtanding ſome obſcurities in the works of God, yet we ſee ſo many ſhining marks of his wiſdom, that the philoſopher juſtly concludes, we ought to admit that wiſdom, where we do not ſee it. Yet a myſtery in the Goſ-

pel, where are ſo many indiſputable truths, and ſo fair and full a moral, leads him to conclude, and ſometimes condemn the whole, as myſterious. He may be ſuppoſed to have the ſtyle of ſcripture in view, where he obſerves, "that they "who pretend to teach divine truths, in "allegorical, ſymbolical, or any myſte-"rious language, deſerve to be ſuſpected "of impoſture*." It might be here anſwered, that his lordſhip ſeems not to remember, that allegorical language was, and ſtill is the phraſeology, generally made uſe of by the ſages and teachers in the eaſtern parts of the world.—But we rather aſk, muſt prophecies be invariably and unerringly applied to one particular event, and doctrines in the ſame manner neceſſarily determined to one particular ſenſe? That is, muſt the one apply, and the other explain itſelf? Muſt the intellectual powers of man be entirely employed to ſtudy corporeal nature? But why do the phænomena wear a veil; why

* Vol. I. p. 341.

do

do the works any more than the word of God require, according to his lordſhip's own confeſſion, ſo much labour to unfold? If the works of the Creator, their uſes and ends, ill underſtood, and miſtaken by mankind for ſome thouſand years, detract not from the wiſdom of the Creator, neither will the prophecy, wrong applied, nor the doctrine ill explained. His lordſhip has told us, that reaſon muſt be cultivated, in order to diſcover the Being of God himſelf*: It can therefore be no objection either to his word or to his works, that they require the ſame cultivation of reaſon for their diſcovery.

Nothing, he allows, in ſpeculation, is ſo proper to enforce moral obligations, as a true revelation†: yet at other times, nothing is ſo impertinent: and the will of God, and the duty of man are "moſt evidently" revealed in the conſtitution of the world and of the human ſyſtem‡.

* Vol. II. p. 4. † Vol. IV. p. 245.
‡ Ibid. p. 247.

Nothing, he aſſerts, is ſo neceſſary, as a reformation of manners, and yet with the ſame breath, he maintains, ſuch a reformation inconſiſtent with the conſtitution of the human ſyſtem *. — Again, we are, according to the philoſopher, to frame our ideas from the phænomena, whenever the doctrines of faith, are to be denied; but we are to believe his lordſhip's opinion of the phyſical attributes, whatever ideas we may frame, from the phænomena †; and to deny the moral, "though a multitude of the phæ-"nomena are conformable to our ideas of "goodneſs." We are to admit the divine wiſdom in every inſtance, though remote from our obſervation, becauſe we ſee it in ſo many: — yet though we have, according to his lordſhip, more of good, both phyſical and moral, than of evil ‡, we are not thence to deduce the divine goodneſs.

* Vol. IV. p. 244. † Vol. IV. p. 327.
‡ P. 328.

Upon

Upon occaſion, the authority of the wiſeſt philoſophers, and of the moſt ancient poets, is of weight, in lending their verdict to the Philoſopher's law of nature, or aſſiſting him to get rid of Styx and Tartarus: But let the ancient ſages be produced, as lamenting human ignorance, and the defects of human reaſon; and Socrates himſelf is miſled by metaphyſical curioſity. But ſtill, theſe ſame ſages, though confeſſing their ignorance, and abuſed for it by his lordſhip, are ſaid to have diſcovered the whole truth, and the whole ſecret of divine religion *; and to have known, very fully, the relation in which they ſtood to the firſt intelligent Cauſe of all things, the Maker and Preſerver of the world †. So much for their knowledge: but what ſhall we ſay of their integrity, when his lordſhip tells us, that they took men out of the relation of creatures to their Crea-

* Vol. IV. p. 182.

† Ib. p. 181.

tor,

tor, and placed them in that of ſlaves to their tyrants ‡: — And yet, according to our Philoſopher, there is not one moral precept in the Goſpel, which was not taught by the heathen Philoſophers *. They were certainly badly taught, when his lordſhip tells us, that numberleſs, ridiculous, cruel rites — were held as neceſſary to obtain the favour, and to avert the anger of Heaven, as the ſtricteſt obſervation of morality — nay more neceſſary.

Again, his lordſhip tells us, "that "the original principles of this choice "(of virtue) were ſtrongly laid in the "conſtitution of things: and theſe Phi- "loſophers muſt have been ſtupid as "well as blind, if they had not felt, as "well as ſeen, that the ultimate end of "this choice, was the happineſs of man- "kind: They felt it, they ſaw it, they "proved it to others." — Now, what a peculiar ſagacity, and how far ſuperior

‡ Ib. p. 170. * P. 182.

to that of theſe Philoſophers, had his lordſhip, who could after this maintain, that the Author of this conſtitution, requiring virtue for our practice, and propoſing happineſs, as the end and reward of it, was neither a righteous, nor a good Being; and neither framed this conſtitution of things for man, nor man to be happy. He would expoſe the opinion of God being infinite goodneſs, for this reaſon, "that then the happineſs of men ought to be proportionable to the goodneſs of God; that is, infinite, than which, ſays he, no greater abſurdity can be conceived *." Yet he can find no abſurdity in ſuppoſing the ſame God, who is infinite wiſdom and knowledge, communicating to his creatures neceſſary knowledge of himſelf, in a manner proportionable to their capacities †.

He gives juſt applauſe to thoſe ancient legiſlators, who were extremely ſolicitous to inculcate the doctrine of future rewards and puniſhments, and he ſtyles

* Vol. IV. p. 335. † Ib. p. 355.

them

them the firſt, and beſt miſſionaries that have been in the world *. — Our Philoſopher then, upon his own principles, was one of the worſt, who is ſo very anxious to deſtroy, what they were ſo ſolicitous to inculcate. They were, as he confeſſes, "miſſionaries of good po-"licy, and good manners, and in order "to promote them both, of religion "likewiſe:" — What good policy, or good manners then, our new miſſionary was poſſeſſed of, who attempts to baniſh religion from the world, is left to his admirers to demonſtrate.

Sometimes he acquaints us with the madneſs of the Egyptians on theological ſubjects; and it is this people, I think, whom he repreſents, as deducing from their philoſophy, ſuch a ſyſtem of religion, as rendered them a proverb among Polytheiſts and Idolaters. But elſewhere he tells us, that Moſes might take from theſe ſame Egyptians his belief of "the beginning of things:"—and that the be-

* Vol. I. p. 306.

lief

lief of the one ſupreme Being was publickly profeſſed in the moſt ancient times of that monarchy, and held "at all times," in their ſecret theology. —— Sometimes the notion of the one God, the Creator of all things, is moſt natural to the conceptions of the firſt inhabitants of the globe, but ſoon after Polytheiſm and Idolatry are ſaid to be more conſonant to their rude minds. And thus the moſt ancient philoſophers, theologers and divines, are repreſented, as ſometimes holding, and ſometimes not holding the Unity. But his lordſhip has charity, and finds excuſes for theſe men, whilſt Chriſtian divines are moſt odious, and what not. This is ſomething hard upon the laſt, as they had no more light to direct them, upon his lordſhip's principles, than the former. — Again, the philoſophers are in one place ſaid to have diſcovered and explained almoſt all the particulars, wherein religion conſiſted, yet elſewhere they are repreſented as the moſt preſumptuous dogmatiſts, and

and in every age from the beginning, the principal corrupters of it.

He ſometimes adopts the principles of reaſoning, which he condemns in others, and ſometimes cenſures the very opinions, which he elſewhere contends for, as only true and orthodox. "They, "ſays he, that is, the Egyptian and "Grecian Philoſophers, confined the "monarch, i, e. the ſupreme God, "like an Eaſtern Prince, to the inmoſt "receſſes of his palace, where they ſup-"poſed him to remain immoveable:" And yet this is his own grand principle; and to ſuppoſe the Deity preſent with his works, he tells us ſoon after, is to traduce and degrade him. — He affects indeed to reſtore natural Theiſm, or the pure religion of nature, and yet confines the Firſt Philoſophy, and indeed all philoſophy worth cultivating, to the examination of effects, deeming all reference of them to final cauſes, or intereſting God in the direction and preſervation of his works, as impertinent at leaſt, if not impious.

Sometimes

Sometimes he commends the national theiſm of the heathen, in order to expoſe the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the Jews: again he aſſerts, that the unity of the Godhead was eſtabliſhed among the Jews, in order to expoſe the faith of Chriſtians. Heathen theologers are made as abſurdly ſuperſtitious, and to abound with as much wild enthuſiaſm, metaphyſical jargon, and pneumatical madneſs as you pleaſe, that he may thence derive the ſame abſurdities and extravagancies upon the Jew and Chriſtian.

Sometimes the Jews are repreſented as a people moſt ſtupid, and ſottiſhly ignorant, the moſt ſuperſtitious and wicked of any that have appeared amongſt the nations: —— But elſewhere he ſeriouſly tells us, that Socrates and Plato might have had the ſame ſucceſs in reforming the manners of men, and in reſtoring the purity of natural religion at Athens, without any divine miſſion, that Eſdras and Nehemias had at Jeruſalem, in reviving and improving more effectually, the ceremonies and obſervances of Judaiſm,

daiſm, by means which experience and good policy ſuggeſted to them, if the two Greeks had been as the two Jews were, the legiſlators, and ſecond founders of their commonwealth.

He allows, that God may give a principle of immortality to the material ſoul; and yet treats it as abſurd and impoſſible, that he ſhould give any illumination to the rational ſoul: and his lordſhip aſcribes this laſt opinion, as peculiar to the times of ſuperſtition. He treats dæmons and genii, to whom were aſſigned different ranks and different employments, as imaginary beings; and yet the Philoſopher can admit orders of beings, far ſuperior to man, and endowed with different capacities, and degrees of intelligence *.

The doctrine of ſpirits, he tells us, and the opinion of angels and archangels, is Jewiſh and Cabaliſtical dreaming; and yet, acccording to the Philoſopher, there may be as much difference between ſome

* Vol. I. p. 141.

other creatures of God, and man, as there is between a man and an oyſter.

He ſuppoſes it "difficult to believe a "God, who acts againſt his attributes "and the perfection of his nature in one "ſyſtem, only to have a reaſon the more "for acting agreeably to them in ano-"ther." This is againſt Woolaſton and the divines, who hold a future ſtate; yet the Philoſopher can find no difficulty, nor inconſiſtency in his own hypotheſis, of rational creatures ſuffering in this ſyſtem, for the greater diſplay of infinite wiſdom in the ſyſtem of the univerſe.

A gradation of animal beings appeared, according to his lordſhip, fit or neceſſary in the divine ideas: But a gradual ſucceſſion of beings, ariſing from leſs to greater perfection and happineſs, is, according to his lordſhip, inconſiſtent with the perfections of God.

Quoting and confuting Clarke, in his way, for his deſcription and vindication of the account of the Fall, and of the original ſtate of man, "which was innocent and ſimple," till God, for the ſin of man,

changed this happy conſtitution of things, his lordſhip calls out, "In the name of God, "is this to prove? Do men who prove no "better, deſerve an anſwer?"— And yet this unbelieving Lord, however he may deſpiſe Moſes and Clarke upon this ſubject, can eaſily admit the account given us by the Jeſuits, of the pure and natural religion of the Chineſe, — of their golden age, and the ſtate of innocence and ſimplicity, which they enjoyed, while it laſted: — And that their ſufferance of phyſical evil, was owing to their commiſſion of moral *. Let all the moſt ancient, and the moſt learned of the Philoſophers agree in ſome general and obſcure traditions of the paradiſaical ſtate, and the Fall, it will avail little with his lordſhip, as to the credibility of this change in the conſtitution of things †: — Reaſon will not admit, that the firſt deſigns of God were diſappointed ‡: and yet this ſame reaſon of his lordſhip's, which rejects

* P. 155, 6. † P. 264. ‡ P. 345.

the

the Jewiſh, will admit the Chineſe traditions, of very remote antiquity, which acquaint him, that this people fell from their once happy ſtate into the errors of other nations, and all the conſequences of them.

Indeed his lordſhip's faith is never wanting;—nay, he is "ſtrong in the faith" of any thing, that may ſeem to favour his own principles and paſſions. Very ſlender premiſſes, when patched together, after his own refined and ſingular way, will be eaſily brought to conclude in favour of his own ſingular opinions; and even traditions, confeſſedly falſe, by their concurrence, confirm his general or particular truths; when ten-fold evidence is good for nothing, if advanced in ſupport of eſtabliſhed opinions. The records of the Chineſe, the Mexican, and the Peruvian, are ſufficiently authentic, in proving the Philoſopher's ſyſtem; but are all good for nothing, when they would ſeem to countenance the hiſtory of Moſes. Nay though Egyptian, Phenician, Chaldean, Indian and Grecian traditions may

be conformable in many circumſtances, and agree to the ſeveral particulars in the old Teſtament, " they might," his lordſhip tells us, " differ in others, and the " whole of thoſe that are loſt, might be " repugnant to one another, and to that " of the Jews." Excellent induction! " What we know and ſee" confirmed by different hiſtorians of different nations, may be falſe, from what " we do not know" was ſaid, or might be ſaid by others.

Thus fabulous traditions of things, ſuppoſed to be done in ages quite unknown to us, are enough to ſhake the authority of the Bible, and of the univerſal deluge in particular; when the unanimous voice of hiſtory joined to the teſtimonies produced by nature, through all her heights, and all her depths, is good for nothing in ſupport of the hiſtory of Noah.

Sometimes all antiquity is fabulous, made up of dark and uncertain traditions, on which we can build and believe nothing. Yet, upon occaſion, he can,

to

to favour his own hypotheſis, advance as probable, the darkeſt legends that antiquity has preſerved. It might perhaps be ſhewn, he thinks, that Arts and Sciences came from the weſt, in a more remote age than any of the Greeks had knowledge of;——that they were introduced and ſpread by the Atlantic people, who over-ran Africa and Europe, and of whom Solon had never heard, till the Egyptian prieſts related to him theſe wonders; or he might bring them, perhaps, from the kingdom of Uranus, that kingdom, to which Atlas, coeval with Saturn and his brother, gave his name.*

In favour of an hypotheſis, he can imagine, without ſo much as an hint, from a broken tradition, that there might be dynaſties more ancient, than the Theban moſt ancient dynaſty of Egypt, wherein Polytheiſm prevailed, before the knowledge of the unity †. Nay, his lordſhip has faith in ſpurious goſpels and epiſtles, long ſince periſhed, as well as

* Vol. I. p. 291, and elſewhere. † Vol. I. p. 303.

in traditions beyond all our records:—and the authenticity of the moſt early chriſtian writers is admitted without ſcruple, becauſe he ſuppoſes, by them he can prove the no authenticity of the goſpels; no preſent or ancient copies of which are ſufficient to aſſure us, of their being genuine, and the ſame as the originals; though the chriſtian myſteries, our critic aſſures us, are true copies of the Pagan, and enable us to judge of the originals, which we have not.

He can ſee clearly the ſupreme Being in the BEL of the Chaldeans, and in the KNEPH of the orthodox Egyptians; but cannot find him in the Jewiſh Scriptures: No nation had it ſeems ſuch mean ideas of the Divinity in many reſpects, as this†: and yet they held the unity of God, he owns‡; which he likewiſe owns, on other occaſions, few nations of the world did hold, as polytheiſm and idolatry, he tells us, prevailed almoſt

† Vol. I. p. 277. ‡ P. 367.

every

every where §: and to invalidate the divine authority of the holy ſcriptures, manifeſt in the majeſtic diſplay of the divinity, as there deſcribed, he would perſuade us, if we will take his word for it, that in the oriental writers, we have as magnificent deſcriptions of the ſupreme Being.

Lord Bolingbroke obſerves,† that nations, like men, have their infancy; and the few paſſages of that time which they retain, are not ſuch as deſerved moſt to be remembered, but ſuch as being moſt proportioned to that age, made the ſtrongeſt impreſſions on their minds: Hiſtory was at firſt intended only to record the names, or perhaps the general characters of ſome famous men; or to tranſmit in groſs the remarkable events of every age to poſterity.—This is very juſtly obſerved; yet his lordſhip will not allow the infancy of the Jewiſh ſtate and nation, the benefit of this obſervation:

§ Vol. I. p. 318. † Letters on Hiſt. vol. I.

o

and he objects to the ancient hiſtory of the Bible, though it contains the very thing he requires in the firſt eſſays of hiſtory, viz. a record of names—general characters of ſome famous men, and the moſt remarkable events and which made the ſtrongeſt impreſſion; together with a few paſſages, which Lord Bolingbroke has judged not the moſt deſerving to be remembered; though they ſerve, we ſay, to very good purpoſe, in obviating his lordſhip's objections againſt the Jews on another occaſion.

Concerning the Scriptures, he ſays, "* If their authenticity and divine original be ſufficiently eſtabliſhed by the external proof; it is both impertinent and profane, to confirm divine teſtimony, by ſhewing that there is reaſon to believe it true."†—It would indeed be

* Vol. II. p. 212.

† Yet he afterwards tells them that "as the authenticity of the Scriptures has ſuffered much diminution by length of time, and by other ways; they,

be ſo, were there no philoſophers like his lordſhip, who demand a reaſon for their faith, and reject the Scriptures, becauſe "not founded," as they ſuppoſe, "on argument," and human experience, and little conformable to the reaſon of things;—who are ſo ſceptical as to admit no grounds of faith, and ſo dogmatical as to pronounce againſt all reaſonableneſs of revelation; and yet ſo inconſiſtent as to ſay, that ſuch reaſonableneſs proved, is impertinent or profane. Here we have ſeen his lordſhip would have the reaſonableneſs of revelation reſt upon mere authority, and yet in a few pages after, he exclaims againſt authority in opinion, which muſt, he ſays, be founded in reaſon, and be agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind, or be founded in nothing. Much more might be added, of what Lord Bolingbroke has ſaid concerning the

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they, the divines, would do better if they truſted leſs to their own ſkill in the eſtabliſhment of the external proofs of a traditional revelation."

Phil. Works, vol. II. p. 274.

prerogative of reaſon, and the abſurdity of reſignation to authority; but I ſhall only cite the following paſſage, concerning the internal proof of revelation, as it looks ſo boldly in the face of what he has juſt now advanced of the ſufficiency of the external:——"The prero-
"gative of reaſon extends farther than
"the examination of witneſſes, and other
"external teſtimony. There is an-
"other ground of probability to be eſta-
"bliſhed; and if this cannot be eſtabliſh-
"ed, the credit of a revelation will not
"ſupport itſelf on the other alone. This
"ground of probability is that which
"was mentioned at the ſame time with
"the former, and is called internal evi-
"dence. Divines found it high, and
"build much upon it; but their
"proceeding is, to my apprehenſion,
"alike abſurd and licentious.*"

Hard fate of the divines! If they inſiſt on more than the external evidence, they are impertinent and profane; and

* Vol. II. p. 274.

yet

yet if they inſiſt not on more, they are wanting in that "without which the "credit of a revelation cannot be ſup-"ported:" and what is ſtill harder; let them proceed to make good the internal evidences, yet "theſe neither are, nor "can be, according to lord Bolingbroke, "ſuch poſitive proofs as they are pre-"tended to be."

He would diſcredit the divine law, the revealed will of God, and has traduced Moſes, as a blaſphemer, for ſaying or ſuppoſing this, becauſe it produced not invariably and univerſally the effect intended; and yet the ſame lord Bolingbroke has repreſented the Firſt Philoſophy, and the true religion of nature, as corrupted from its foundation, defeated in its effects, and every where overwhelmed and buried under the follies, and groſs ſuperſtitions of mankind. And though he has again and again affirmed reaſon, independent of revelation, to be ſufficient for the uſe of man, in his moral, and religious conduct; yet he has, by a laboured detail of facts and opinions,

nions, — of folly, ignorance and ſuperſtition, prevailing amongſt the wiſe and the learned, the polite, and civilized, as well as the rude and barbarous, ſhewn the ſame reaſon to be every where inſufficient. This undeniable detail of his lordſhip — this demonſtration, I will call it, of the defect of reaſon to the purpoſes, for which it is aſſerted to have been given, ſhould for ever ſtop the mouths of our adverſaries, in making the abuſe and failure of revelation in its effects, an argument againſt its uſe, authority and truth. For if the objection againſt revelation, and its author, that they wanted ſucceſs, is good for any thing; it is equally good againſt natural religion, and its beſt miſſionary, Socrates, againſt whom notwithſtanding, lord Bolingbroke objected, that he wanted ſucceſs.

From the no-efficacy, or rather from the inſufficient efficacy of the miracles exhibited to the Iſraelites, he would infer that no ſuch miracles were exhibited, or if they were, he ſuppoſes they would have

have operated not only to the conviction of that generation of men, to whom they were ſhewn, but of all the ſucceeding generations of that people, if not of all the nations of the earth: But when he has to attack Chriſtianity, it is inſinuated as an objection againſt it, that its divine authority was not manifeſted to all concerned, i. e. to all mankind *. To ſatisfy which objection, there muſt have been a Meſſiah, with all the train of miracles attending him, appearing, I ſay not in every ſtreet of Jeruſalem, and in every corner of Judea, but at leaſt in every city and nation of the world. His objections here, and upon other occaſions, are rather inſinuated, than fairly and fully inforced: This was a prudent conduct; for a more clear and explicit arguing the caſe would have eaſily betrayed the abſurdities, with which ſuch objections are loaded. ——

* Vol. II. p. 267.

His

His lordſhip expoſes, as he reaſonably might, the corruptions of the clergy or church of Rome, in the compoſitions they accept for ſins, by which the licence of ſinning muſt be greatly enlarged. He tells us of a Tarriff *, or book of rates, which he had ſeen in print, wherein the prices are ſet over againſt every ſin, leſt purchaſers ſhould be impoſed upon; and ſuch ſins are ſpecified, as the moſt polluted imagination would hardly conceive. This indeed is abominable enough, and had been urged with ſufficient propriety, had not the Philoſopher, by his expreſs declarations, deduced, as he pretends, from the great charter of Nature, and by conſequences regularly deducible from thoſe declarations, indulged to mankind, the gratification of every appetite, and the perpetration of every crime, and theſe requiring for their pardon, neither pilgrimage, pennance, nor penalty.

* Vol. IV. p. 217.

Not

Not more conſiſtent is he through his whole work, in aſſerting that the light of reaſon preſcribes the practice of every virtue, and yet that the law of nature, by which man is to walk, admits of the commiſſion of every vice: It is true, he does not affirm this in direct terms; for this were too groſs, and too much to inſult the common ſenſe of mankind: — But the inſtances he has given of particular crimes, which he would reduce to this law of nature, and confirm to belong to it, from the practice of ſome particular perſon or people, ſavage or civilized, may be extended and applied to authorize every other crime, which ever had a being in the world. — This method of confounding all right and wrong, virtue and vice, of appealing to inſtinct, paſſion, or practice, as the meaſure of what is right and reaſonable in nature, law, and conſcience, is carried, I think, to its higheſt extravagance, by the author of the late Eſſay on Mind, and with leſs reſerve and inconſiſtency, than what

appears

appears in lord Bolingbroke; but both of theſe writers are more indebted to Montaigne, for their ſcepticiſm on this and other occaſions, than they would ſeem willing to allow; and are leſs pardonable than their original. He was a whim, and irregular, and he tells us ſo; — extravagant by profeſſion, fond of novelty and paradox, and who had a mind to be merry, and to tell his tale. But theſe latter eſſayiſts aſſume grave airs, and would impoſe upon mankind the ſame trifles and traſh, with a ſhew of argument and authority, and under the ſolemn form of Sages and Philoſophers.

Lord Bolingbroke tells us, " that faith " and reaſon, revealed and natural know- " ledge, ought to be always diſtin- " guiſhed; leſt the one ſhould be con- " fined, and the other extended too " much. The Philoſopher ſhould for- " bear to invade the province of the di- " vine, and ſhould content himſelf, to " aſſert and promote natural theology, " without

" without oppoſing it to ſupernatural *:" And yet with the ſame breath, he acknowledges, that he is oppoſing, as he has done through this whole poſtſcript, the theological, which is the ſupernatural and revealed hypotheſis, as he has done the ſame through all his philoſophical works; — has deſtroyed the juſt diſtinction, which he has here made, and given all to nature and reaſon, and nothing to faith and revelation.

As the mind of man, we are told, is the moſt noble part, I preſume, ſays his lordſhip, we ſhould determine his ſpecies by it principally †; and yet he makes brutes our fellow-animals ‡; and elſewhere he contends that they have the ſame ſoul, and the ſame reaſon at leaſt, if not a better than man.

To ſet aſide the expediency and neceſſity of revelation, he has again and again aſſerted, and endeavoured to prove the perfection and ſufficiency of human rea-

* Vol. II. p. 150. † Vol. I. p. 17.
‡ Ibid. p. 35.

ſon, in what concerns our duty to God and man: And yet this ſame Philoſopher from his cloſet thus addreſſes his noble friend: — "Suppoſing our monopoly "of reaſon, would not your lordſhip "chuſe to walk upon four legs, to wear "a long tail, and to be called a beaſt, "with the advantage of being deter- "mined by irreſiſtible and unerring in- "ſtinct to thoſe truths that are neceſſary "to your well-being; rather than to "walk on two legs, to wear no tail, "and to be honoured with the title of "Man, at the expence of deviating from "them perpetually *?"

The ſame writer who has poured ſo much ſcorn and contempt upon the hiſtory and conduct of the Jewiſh lawgiver, affects to give us a better and truer account of the riſe and progreſs of true Theology; and has apologized for thoſe human legiſlators, who invented, but concealed the knowledge of the true

* Letter to Lord Bathurſt of the true Uſe of Retirement and Study, p. 196.

God:

God: and who in the room thereof connived at, or adopted, or applied, as better ſuited to the vulgar mind, and to the benefit of the ſociety, idolatry in theory, and ſuperſtition in practice: and he who can give no credit, and allow no authority to the doctrine of the unity, as found in the Jewiſh Scriptures, can find the ſame doctrine very clearly aſſerted, amidſt broken, and very remote and obſcure traditions of the Theban Dynaſty.

The general tenour of the Moſaic law and hiſtory, his lordſhip allows, aſſerts the unity of the Godhead *; and yet, the true God, he tells us, was unknown to Moſes. The Ten Commandments were old faſhioned vulgar things, which were below his lordſhip's notice, or had eſcaped his memory: otherwiſe he had obſerved Moſes declaring the one God—the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is †: — "Who "is like unto thee, O Lord, among the

* P. 369.

† Vid. Exod. xi. 15. and Iſ. xxxvii. 16, &c.

" Gods ?" — But his lordſhip proceeds : " If we conſider his laws, as means of " preſerving Monotheiſm, and the pu- " rity of worſhip, in oppoſition to poly- " theiſm and ſuperſtition, we ſhall " find, that no means could be worſe " proportioned to the end *:" — and yet in this very page he had objected it, to the God of Moſes, that he thought it enough to preſerve the knowledge of himſelf, and the purity of his worſhip in Paleſtine, for which purpoſe he gave a particular law. Strabo, whoſe authority is ſo reſpectable with his lordſhip, but which he was pleaſed to forget upon this occaſion, tells us, that Moſes differed both from the Egyptians and Greeks, (though I think the Philoſopher afterwards tells us, that he ſtole from the former, particularly the doctrine of the unity, though this was a more ſecret doctrine among them, than that of a future ſtate, of which he was ignorant †) in his ſentiments of the Divinity;

* P. 375. † Vol. IV. p. 154.

and

and had worthier notions of God than either†. But his lordſhip, upon this ſubject, prefers the authority of his Bible: he cites even the book of Geneſis, (which upon other occaſions is all fable and romance, a ſeries of tales, fit to amuſe children alone) becauſe it ſerves his purpoſe to ſhew, that the true God was known to others, beſides the Jewiſh line of Patriarchs, and before the Iſraelites were a people §. And who can forbear ſmiling, when the philoſopher ſeriouſly tells us, "I have the authority of the "Bible on my ſide; I ſhall have it ſo "again, before I have done."

But if Moſes ſpeak true, when he depoſes for his lordſhip, he deſerves no credit upon any other occaſion; for the philoſopher aſks, "what materials he "could have before him, when he "wrote the book of Geneſis, at leaſt the "firſt chapters of it, wherein he relates "moſt circumſtantially the creation of the "world, and the whole progreſs of that "great event?"—With what modeſty

† Strabo, p. 423. Ed. Caſaub. § Vol. II. p. 183.

this queſtion is put by his lordſhip, cannot but raiſe our amazement, when we remember that in the philoſophy Lord Bolingbroke has given us, at the diſtance of ſome thouſand years from the time of Moſes, there is a minute detail and regular proceſs of the whole work: But our wonder is ſtill raiſed, when he affirms, "that though Moſes had taken his materials from the mouth of Adam himſelf, yet his writings afford no hiſtorical evidence;"—though he had before told us, and pretended to prove it, "that the firſt men were competent "witneſſes of the firſt propagations of "the animal kind; which would be of "itſelf a ſufficient proof, that they were "ſuch of the beginning of the world *:" And he afterwards affirms †, "that they "would be ſpectators at twice, and in a "reverſed order, of the whole piece." But let Adam be ignorant, and Moſes be damned for his circumſtantial account of the creation, we have only the more reaſon

* Vol. II. p. 295. † P. 297.

to laud his lordſhip's immenſe ſagacity, who gives us his own calculation, how many days and hours might go to the formation of a camel, and how many more to that of an elephant:‡—Lord Bolingbroke is the Pre-adamite, who deſcribes the proceſs of the creation, as if he had aſſiſted at it §.

Upon occaſion, human teſtimony is the proper proof of every fact, whereof we have not ourſelves been witneſſes, "without any regard to the ſuppoſed "conformity of it, to the general ideas "of mankind*." But afterwards, when the authenticity of the Moſaic hiſtory is to be examined, the moſt rigorous rules are called in: and in particular, nothing repugnant to the univerſal experience of mankind, muſt be contained in it†: and reading the holy Scriptures, is being tranſported into a ſort of fairy land, where every thing is done by magic and enchantment, where "a ſyſtem of na-

‡ Vol. II. p. 296. § Lett. on Hiſt. vol. I. p. 108.
* Vol. V. p. 304. † P. 337.

" ture very different from ours" prevails; " and all I meet with," ſays his lordſhip, " is repugnant to my experi- " ence, and to the cleareſt, and moſt " diſtinct ideas I have*."

The Theogonians, with all their extravagancies; Homer and Heſiod, with all their abſurdities, are ſufficient for his lordſhip to prove a Chaos, and from thence a beginning of the world; while the ſimple and majeſtic manner of Moſes upon this ſubject, provokes the laughter, the contempt and horror of the philoſopher.

His lordſhip explains and comments upon, with much complacency, the ſacred language and hieroglyphics of the Egyptians; but types and figures in an apoſtle are mere " cabaliſtical architec- " ture†;" and when applied to explain the old Teſtament, are fanciful and abſurd ‡.

His own tradition (of the beginning of the world) he allows is " muffled up almoſt

* Vol. V. p. 344. † P. 354. ‡ P. 377.

" in

"in allegories and fables," and though "diſguiſed, diſputed, and even weaken-"ed by time," is yet indiſputably true: at other times; allegories and fables, diſcredit any doctrine or opinion: and the Chriſtian hiſtory, being a tradition of opinion, he infers, for this reaſon, is not to be regarded: yet his lordſhip might know, that the general ſubject of both the Old and New Teſtament, is as much the tradition of fact; as the "opinion," he muſt call it, of the beginning of the world.

But what revolts him againſt the Moſaic account of the creation, is, that it ſeems to lay the foundation of Polytheiſm*. Let us then examine his lordſhip's account; and allow to his argument all that can be allowed, the authenticity of his tradition, "that the world had a "beginning." It follows not from his proofs, that this tradition would lead them to one God; though this he aſſumes §, in contradiction to the whole

* Vol. V, p. 369. § P. 310.

proceſs

proceſs of creation, as deſcribed by him, and to what he aſſerts, of "the "doubt and uncertainty of mankind "concerning the firſt cauſe," ariſing from this tradition.* It was only, he ſays, that "ſome cauſe" of the world exiſted, of which the firſt men could not doubt; and ſo little, after all, is to be built on this tradition, that he aſſerts, the demonſtration of God's exiſtence will remain unſhaken, "whether the world "had a beginning in time or not:†" and he retracts his opinion, "that the firſt "men, at leaſt, who knew that they "were ſuch, and who ſaw the material "world begin, would be led by the na-"tural conceptions of their minds, to "acknowledge a firſt cauſe;‡" and now ſuppoſes, the firſt men ignorant of the firſt cauſe, and that the variety of the phænomena, which ſtruck their ſenſes, would lead the generality, moſt probably, to imagine a variety of cauſes; and

* Vol. V. p. 309. † P. 317. ‡ P. 317-18.

more

more obſervations, we are told, and deeper reflections than the firſt men could make, were neceſſary to prove the unity of the firſt cauſe.*

Such, at laſt, is Lord Bolingbroke's laboured ſyſtem of creation, which is to correct the Moſaic, and to prove to mankind, the Being of a God. It leaves the firſt men, we ſee, ignorant of the one ſupreme Creator, who, it ſeems, had ſo ordered matters from the firſt, that "Polytheiſm and idolatry were more "conformable to human ideas——and "better proportioned," by an analogy of human conceptions, to the uncultivated reaſon of mankind. So that Polytheiſm, deducible from the manner of God's working, which he ſuppoſes the Moſaic account is chargeable with, is abominable; but Polytheiſm, deducible from the work, which is his lordſhip's account, is rational, credible and pious. This, no doubt, does great honour to

* Vol. V. p. 318.

the

the Creator, and ſufficiently expoſes the abſurdity and blaſphemy of Moſes, who tells us, that "God in the beginning "created the heavens and the earth."

But ſtill, Moſes did not underſtand, at leaſt did not teach the Newtonian Philoſophy: and his ignorance of the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, deſtroys all faith in the Jewiſh tradition and hiſtory: And yet the oppoſition of a philoſophical hypotheſis does not at all affect, according to his lordſhip, the truth, even of a Chaldaic tradition, when it ſupports a propoſition he would defend:† nay an Indian brachman, or a Babylonian prieſt are reſpectable witneſſes, and of great authority; though Jewiſh ſcribes are a moſt ignorant and lying race, and Chriſtian divines ſcruple little what they ſay. His lordſhip can approve a fragment of Beroſus preſerved by Euſebius, when it makes, as he ſuppoſes, for his own hypotheſis; at other times, Euſebius is

† Vol. V. p. 258.

weak

weak and fraudulent, and no collateral evidence at all.*

Thus too Joſephus, when he favours his lordſhip's opinions, has great probability on his ſide; but when he would ſupport the Jewiſh hiſtory, "had a com-"mon intereſt of country, of religion, "or of profeſſion, to diſguiſe or falſify "the truth †."

Nay Dr. Barrow, and St. Paul, are upon occaſion, good hands ‡, when they are ſuppoſed to fight for his lordſhip: At other times, the one talks flimſy ſtuff, and the other Cabaliſtical nonſenſe. — The books of the Egyptians are now moſt ſacred and authentic §; — but afterwards, and upon another occaſion, they are mere impoſition, and of no more authority, out of Egypt, than the polytheiſm, ſuperſtition, and idolatry of other nations gave them ¶.

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* Vol. V. p. 324, 346. † Vol. III. p. 281. ‡ P. 361. § Vol. V. p. 249. ¶ P. 353.

All

All evidence is good, that ſupports, and all bad, that contradicts the principles of the Firſt Philoſophy: As a general tradition that the world began, is true, becauſe it comports with his lordſhip's opinion; but a general tradition of the late commencement of the world, is general deluſion, becauſe it comports with the account of Moſes. He ſets aſide, in the conciſeſt manner, with one general cenſure, all the collateral evidence collected by Bochart, Huetius, &c. to the hiſtory of the Bible, by declaring them frankly, fools or madmen, and then modeſtly concludes, that it has No evidence. And yet the Philoſopher knew well, the nature and different weight of various and different teſtimonies, to the ſame cauſe: He ſeems to think that we ſhould do injuſtice to the Portico, and to the garden of Gargettus, if we took our notions of ſtoiciſm from Velleius, or of epicureiſm from Balbus, who both may be ſuppoſed, to give the worſt repreſentation of the opinions, they were each engaged by profeſſion to oppoſe:

oppoſe: and yet he has himſelf taken this very unjuſt method, of giving his notions of Chriſtians and Chriſtianity, from the repreſentation of Celſus and Julian, the profeſſed enemies to both; and ſeems to wiſh, that we had the writings of the ancient heretics, in order to learn the true character and opinions of their antagoniſts, the orthodox. Yet, when the Politician would quote in favour of his own ſentiments, the authority of others, leaſt diſputable, he refers to thoſe authors, who bear witneſs againſt their own prejudices, and are compelled by the force of truth, to confeſs, what their partial inclinations would lead them to deny: "Burnet and Ra-" pin," ſays his lordſhip, "I quote on this " occaſion, for the ſame reaſon, as I " would quote my lord Clarendon " againſt king Charles the firſt, or Lud-" low for him*." This was a generous proceeding, and carried irreſiſtible

* Diſſert. on Parties, p. 49.

conviction

conviction along with it. But the Philoſopher proceeds in a quite different way: he cites the arguments and aſſertions, if not the names, and ſometimes the names of the profeſſed advocates of natural, and the profeſſed enemies of revealed religion, as of authority for the firſt, and againſt the laſt; which is reverſing his former conduct, and citing my lord Clarendon for king Charles, and Ludlow againſt him.

Nay, though he finds difficulty in admitting the authenticity of the New Teſtament, in reſpect to the Miſſion of Chriſt Jeſus; he finds none, in admitting the blaſphemy of the Jews, who rejected him, and of the Pagans, who oppoſed him: — The calumnies of an enemy are good evidence, while the teſtimony of friends, is none — of friends, who forfeited their all, in adhering to the cauſe, on whoſe ſide they depoſe. The authority of Chriſtianity is ſet aſide, becauſe the Jews rejected it; and yet, had they embraced, and bore teſtimony to it, as

ſome

ſome of them did, this too muſt have been rejected, as the teſtimony of friends. So that their oppoſition and calumnies, as enemies, and their teſtimony, as friends and converts, being both of no weight, or of weight only to invalidate the authority of Chriſtianity, to ſatisfy his lordſhip, we ſhould produce the teſtimony of Jews, to the divinity of a religion they rejected, and whoſe author they crucified: And even this we have, as much as in the nature of things can be expected *.

To ſatisfy the Philoſopher, the proofs of revelation ſhould have been not plain only, but irreſiſtible, and carried not only ſtrong marks of truth, ſo as to ſatisfy the ſincere enquirer, but ſuch an indiſputable certainty, as to overwhelm the moſt perverſe and obſtinate with conviction: For one unbeliever might, upon his lordſhip's principles, have rejected the teſtimony of all the world beſide in a

* See Paſchal, p. 76. and Millar's Propagation of Chriſtianity, Vol. 1. p. 210, &c.

converted ſtate, as the teſtimony of friends.

His objections to the authenticity of the New Teſtament, are ſuch, as if admitted, muſt render moſt of the writings, now in the world, ſpurious, as not being atteſted copies of the originals; and his lordſhip's own precious treaſure of the Firſt Philoſophy, may, upon his own principles, be, in the revolution of a century, deemed ſpurious coin. But in this, as in all he has ſaid againſt religion, and its proofs, he has acted not as a critic and a judge, but as a profeſſed enemy and accuſer: and every advantage is taken, every imaginary difficulty aggravated, every ſeeming objection improved; every art of chicane and ſophiſtry employed; and where this will not do, barefaced folly and falſehood are advanced, to diſcredit and deſtroy, what he could not by any means admit, as agreeable to his prejudices and paſſions. This objection, of the want of an original manuſcript of the Scriptures, or of an

an atteſted copy, is, I conceive, like many other of his objections, made for mere form's ſake; and we may be well aſſured, that neither copy, nor original, would ſatisfy the man, who, with the evidence of both, might ſtill have demanded, as he now demands, "Where "is Heaven, and where is Hell?"— and complained that no-body had come to him from thence: A complaint, I will add, which, if heard and relieved by the appearance of one from the dead, had been unſatisfactory to his lordſhip, except the ſame appearance had been general, or rather univerſal, and made to every man born into the world: For an angel from Heaven, appearing to lord Bolingbroke alone, could not, upon his own principles, be any reaſonable evidence, or ſufficient motive of conviction.

To give authenticity to his own opinions, probabilities, poſſibilities, conjectures are ſufficient: To prove the authenticity of the Scriptures, no evidence is ſufficient, but what he knows is impoſſible;

poſſible; and the man would be laughed at, who ſhould require the ſame proof of any other hiſtorical records of the ſame date; though we have evidence far ſuperior, to any that can be produced, in favour of any Pagan hiſtorian or philoſopher.

His lordſhip finding leſs abſurdity in the New, than he ſuppoſes he found in the Old Teſtament, and leſs to be objected againſt the internal proof, demands peremptorily, only the ſupport of the external, in favour of Chriſtian revelation, to render it credible, and worthy of all acceptation: and yet he afterwards makes his Theiſt object againſt the word of God, "that it is not eſtabliſhed, if "the book contains any thing, which "implies an abſolute contradiction, with "any conceivable perfection of the human nature. It is eſtabliſhed by "halves, whatever external proofs you "may bring, unleſs you can ſhew the "things contained in it, which ſeem "repugnant to all our ideas of a perfect "nature, are really conſiſtent with "them;

"them; which muſt be ſhewn, not by "a precarious begging of the queſtion, "but by direct and evident proofs *;"— and a "well attested revelation" is good for nothing. His lordſhip now demands; "Is the doctrine reaſonable? "Is it agreeable to a fitneſs, founded in "the nature of things? †" &c. Thus, though he tells us, that reaſon has nothing to do with the revelation, yet divines, he alſo tells us, are refuted, if they have not reaſon, as well as revelation on their ſide ‡.

"Should a word be invented," ſays his lordſhip, "to ſignify a moral cauſe "of effects purely phyſical, or a phy"ſical cauſe of effects purely moral, "you would laugh at the invention, "and you would be in the right §."— Does not the Philoſopher then deſerve to be laughed at, who has invented a pure phyſical cauſe, or a God with mere phyſical attributes, the author of "the

* Vol. IV. p. 259, 260. † P. 271, 280.
‡ Vol. IV. p. 259. § Vol. I. p. 170.

" Conſtitution of our Moral Syſtem?" For theſe are his lordſhip's own words: and he has in the ſame place told us, that morality is therefore the concern of every man: And afterwards he tells us, * " that " the drift of all Philoſophy, and of all " political ſpeculation, ought to be the " making us better men and better citi- " zens. Thoſe ſtudies, which have no " intention towards improving our mo- " ral characters, have no pretence to be " ſtyled philoſophical:" — And yet the moſt glaring paſſages, and general tendency of lord Bolingbroke's philoſophical works, is to diſcharge men from all moral obligations; ſo far as the belief of a righteous providence, of a moral government of the world, and of the regard God has to virtue here and hereafter, may be ſuppoſed to influence and enforce thoſe obligations.

Concerning the divine attributes he ſays, that human juſtice and human goodneſs are ſuch as the ſupreme Mind

* Letters on Hiſt. Vol. I. p. 144.

has

has made it both our duty and our intereſt to exerciſe, "by the conſtitution of "the human ſyſtem," and by the relations which ariſe in it *: And yet after all, the author of this conſtitution, and of theſe relations, is, according to the Philoſopher, neither juſt, nor good, according to our notions of juſtice and goodneſs: He is not then juſt or good at all: we are not to conceive him as ſuch; and though by his works, which declare his will, and are, according to our Philoſopher, the only book of divine revelation, he has impoſed juſtice and goodneſs upon our practice, yet we are to deny theſe moral qualities, though in the higheſt degree, any place in the divine conduct. From the effects of power and wiſdom legible in the creation, he aſſerts, that we are to infer the Creator infinitely powerful and wiſe; but from the effects of goodneſs and juſtice, legible in the ſame creation, we are not to

* Vol. II. p. 67.

infer the Creator either good or juſt. — In the Letter to Lord Bathurſt, lord Bolingbroke ſays; "we ſee, in ſo many "inſtances, a juſt proportion of things, "according to their ſeveral relations to "one another, that Philoſophy ſhould "lead us to conclude this proportion "preſerved, even where we cannot diſ-"cern it; inſtead of leading us to con-"clude that it is not preſerved: where "we do not diſcern it; or where we "think that we ſee the contrary *." — The obſervation is very juſt, and the Philoſopher, had he been candid and conſiſtent, would have extended it equally to the conſtitution and adminiſtration of the moral, and of the natural world; and thus his objections to the moral attributes would have had no place.

Moral qualities, the Philoſopher will allow, to excell, and to be of an higher order than natural properties; yet quite through his philoſophical works (though with ſome inconſiſtency) he prefers the

* P. 208.

phæno-

phænomena to the virtues, natural attributes to the excluſion of the moral, and the philoſophy of matter to the perfection of mind. Anaxagoras is applauded in the contemplation of the flower, for confining his enquiries to the ſtrainers, and the ſap, and the operations of nature, which conſtitute its beauty and fragrance; and Socrates is condemned for aſcribing both to the handy work of God; though the ſame Anaxagoras is a little before ſuppoſed, to conſider ſecond cauſes, as operating under the direction, and by the energy of the firſt.

Lord Bolingbroke argues conſequentially enough, when he demonſtrates the divine juſtice, in the particular judgments ſent upon particular notorious offenders; But it is with the moſt groſs abſurdity, he notwithſtanding aſſerts, that there is no juſtice in God, nor any particular Providence.

He objects to an opinion founded in abſtract general knowledge, which the knowledge of particulars had little ſhare

in framing*: Have we not an equal right to object to his lordſhip's opinion of a general providence, which excludes all regard to particulars? Can general knowledge be falſe, becauſe not founded in a knowledge of particulars; and yet a general providence be true, not reſpecting and including particulars?

Who can but laugh (though the ſubject is a ſerious one) at his lordſhip's inconſiſtency, in combating the evils of life? — In which, he ſays, there is more good than evil;—for this reaſon; that "every man" prefers exiſtence to non-exiſtence: His lordſhip knew the contrary, and that many have preferred death to life, and fled to the grave, as to a refuge from miſery: but to this he has an anſwer; that the examples of this ſort are only ſuch, as have run mad by diſtemper, or made ſo by enthuſiaſm. Thus pain, heightened to madneſs, is not evil to be objected, as detracting from the ſuperior good in life:—but to

* Vol. I. p. 170.

our

our comfort the philoſopher tells us, "that the evil, if violent, puts an end "ſoon to the ſufferer," (This is not always true, though Epicurus ſaid it) "and is ſoftened by many circumſtances "—above all, by Hope, that cordial "drop, which ſweetens every bitter "potion, even the laſt." This is indeed extraordinary from the writer, who had aſſerted, that there is more good than evil in life, and would perſuade us, that no good is to ſucceed it.

After all, he perſiſts in affirming, that notwithſtanding phyſical evils, as fire, peſtilence, war, devaſtations, &c. to which man is expoſed, "our ſtate in life is as "happy, not only as human eye ever "ſaw, or human ear ever heard, but as "the heart of man can conceive to be-"long to humanity!" We may upon this occaſion join iſſue with his lordſhip, and juſtify the havock of the Canaanites, as not inconſiſtent with their happineſs; and that Joſhua and Moſes, though they were like the heroes of Greece and Rome,

whom

whom his lordſhip ſtyles the plagues of mankind, detract not from the divine goodneſs, in his allotment of ſuperior happineſs to mankind.

Yet, he ſuppoſes, "in peruſing the "hiſtory, the reader ſhudders with hor-"ror, at the proſcriptions of Marius "and Sylla, at the treachery of Theo-"dotus and Achillas, and at the con-"ſummate cruelty of an infant king†." Why, we aſk his lordſhip, is this falſe inſtinct implanted in us by nature, this horror at nothing?—For according to the philoſopher, there was nothing in the proſcription, the treachery, or the cruelty, but what was juſt and righteous, and agreeable to the attributes of God;—the juſtice of whoſe providence he elſewhere defends, in the puniſhment of Marius, as a ſufficient atonement for all the blood he had ſhed, and the miſery he had occaſioned: It belonged, it ſeems, to the righteouſneſs of God to puniſh the guilty;

† Letters on Hiſt. p. 139.

but

but not to protect, or reward the innocent.

This list of Lord Bolingbroke's inconsistencies might be extended to a complete volume; but the present specimen may be sufficient to shew, what a fallible foundation they have, who build their faith on the reasoning of the "First Philosophy," and of its great publisher the Lord Bolingbroke. The whole tenour of his philosophical works presents you with one grand inconsistency: he asserts, and attempts to prove the perfection of the law of Nature, and the sufficiency of human reason to all the purposes of true religion; at the same time he has asserted, and endeavoured to expose the folly of the wisest, the madness of the most learned, and the blasphemy of the most pious, with the ignorance, the impiety, the absurdity, the superstition, the enthusiasm, and general delusion of all mankind, himself and a few atheists of name excepted.

There

There would be no end of enumerating all his lordſhip's inconſiſtencies, contradictions, ſophiſms and fallacies, which abound through his poſthumous works; or in proof of the charge brought againſt him, we might eaſily produce inſtances from every the moſt important doctrine, or article of religion, natural and revealed, which he has condeſcended to oppoſe: But we muſt content ourſelves with adding a few general remarks to thoſe already made on his lordſhip's manner of reaſoning—or the ſemblance of reaſoning, which he would impoſe upon the world for ſolid argument: for he does not always reaſon, when he would be thought to do ſo.

The opinions and arguments of his adverſaries are frequently miſrepreſented, or diſtorted and aggravated, and thus anſwered: He annexes a falſhood to a truth, and by expoſing That, would be thought to have confuted This. A falſe and meretricious ornament, added to a part of a regular and juſt building, muſt ſhake the foundation of the whole.

Jupiter

Jupiter armed with thunder is not to be reſiſted; but tack Ganymede, with a bowl of nectar, to his ſide, and you may laugh at the Pagan theology. That God governs the world, is too obvious and general a truth, to be denied; but bring down God to the character of an Addle, and you may ſmile at providential government. That Man is the concern of Providence, is to be diſputed: But how does his lordſhip proceed? By confuting the aſſumption, that man is the cauſe of "the whole creation."

He ſometimes gives a juſt definition, and then applies it to ſupport a falſe argument:—Or he alters a term; as what Mr. Woolaſton calls the miſery of life, his lordſhip calls an inconvenience; and this is to paſs for a reaſon: He ſometimes gives you plain abſurdity, (as that moral evils are to be ſubmitted to, for the mere ſake of a phyſical ſyſtem) and this is to be taken, upon his lordſhip's word, for ſound philoſophy. He acts through all his works, the part of a hireling at the bar, who ſays, not what is exactly juſt,

but

but whatever may be conducive to his cauſe; and will oppoſe very ſtrenuouſly to-morrow, what he advances with all his rhetoric, and all his reaſoning to-day.

For this, he is as well qualified, as any bar-orator of them all; for he is copious in his verbeage, and never at a loſs for words, which are ſometimes ſubſtituted in the room of argument; for though we ſee his meaning almoſt always, yet we are often at a loſs for the reaſon and truth of his aſſertions; and his words are to be taken for what they are, fine words: His rhetoric is to paſs for a reaſon;—declamation for preciſion and argument, and ſcurrility and calumny for truth; for he often abuſes an adverſary, when he ſhould anſwer him—is more liberal of his reflections upon perſons, than things, is more intent upon the parade of his armour, than vigorous in the confutation of his enemies, and does generally moſt execution, before he draws his ſword. And when he draws, he enters the liſts indeed, with boldneſs and ſelf-ſufficiency enough; he challenges,

and

and affects to triumph over every weapon, the champions of Chriſtianity have employed in its defence; but all this while, you obſerve, that his main ſkill is to evade their weight and force: He flouriſhes, and makes a paſs at a ſuperfluous hair, or the excreſcence of a nail, or ſome artificial or adſcititious ornament, not belonging to the body, and then, if you will believe him, he has left his antagoniſt dead upon the place. His arms are indeed ſplendid, but harmleſs, when directed againſt Heaven.

——— Poſtquam arma Dei ad Vulcania ventum eſt,
Mortalis mucro, glacies ceu futilis, ictu
Diffiluit; fulva reſplendent fragmina arena.

Æn. xii. 740.

We cannot take leave of lord Bolingbroke as a reaſoner, without obſerving upon one ſtriking inconſiſtency which runs through his general conduct, and equally reflects on his patriotic and philoſophic character: — he allows the diſ-

tinction between vice and virtue, and their general effects, in producing the happineſs and miſery of mankind; he aſſerts and affects to contend for the great truths of natural religion, and to vindicate the ways and attributes of God: In his firſt letter to Mr. Pope, he ſhould ſeem to admit for true, at leaſt for authentic and authoritative, Goſpel-Chriſtianity, in oppoſition to artificial theology. He has acknowledged in various paſſages of his other works, the plainneſs and the ſimplicity, the reaſonableneſs and exalted morality of Chriſtian revelation, and has recommended, whatever our private opinions may be, a quiet ſearch after truth, and a reſpect to the laws, religion, and public peace of our country. No man, according to his lordſhip, ought to diſturb the minds of others, and leaſt of all, attempt any thing againſt the ſanctions of religion, whoſe influence has been, and ever muſt be found ſo neceſſary and eſſential to the ſupport and ſecurity of ſociety. And yet the ſame lord Bolingbroke has made it the end of

his

his ſtudies, and the labour of his life, to diſturb the minds of men, and to abolish the religion of his country: He has endeavoured to deſtroy all ſenſe of morality in general, and the Chriſtian morality in particular, by undermining the foundation of the one, and by denying or diſputing the authority of the other: Could Celſus or Julian do more? — For God, and his moral government, he places you under the protection of Nature, and the phænomena; — and for religion and its ſanctions, he ſends you for your guidance, to paſſion and its inſtincts! Could the worſt enemy to his country and mankind, could Epicurus or Diagoras do more? The conduct had been more excuſeable, and not more inconſiſtent, had the Roman orator, after exerting the ſpirit of patriotiſm in the defence of the commonwealth, againſt Catiline and his aſſociates, with his own hands ſet fire to the altars and temples of the Gods, to the city and capitol.

SECTION VII.

IT may be thought ſtrange that an author, who could write ſo clearly, ſo juſtly, ſo judiciouſly, with ſo much preciſion, and in ſo maſterly a manner, where politics and hiſtory were the ſubject, ſhould ſhew himſelf ſo deficient and reprehenſible in point of reaſon, when employed on the ſubjects of philoſophy and theology. But facts ſpeak for themſelves, and require no farther or foreign proof: the excellencies of Lord Bolingbroke, as a writer, are ſounded high by his friends, and acknowledged by his enemies: And the inſtances and proofs of his erroneous and fallacious practice, as a reaſoner, here produced from his philoſophical works, will not, we preſume, be denied or diſputed.

Examples might be produced, of the ſame man appearing in a very different character, when engaged in relating or commenting upon facts, and when reaſoning

ſoning upon principles. Cæſar, notwithſtanding all his ambition, as a man, appears, as an author, candid, temperate, rational and equal. But the ſame Cæſar, when influenced by party and paſſion, had the power, by the exertion of his genius and eloquence, to perplex the debates of the ſenate, on ſo clear and important a point, as the fate of Catiline's aſſociates, who had been convicted of the moſt horrid conſpiracy againſt their country and fellow-citizens.

In the ſpeech which Salluſt has aſſigned to him on this occaſion he appears both infidel and ſophiſt; while the powers of reaſon and clearneſs of conviction flow from the lips of Cato, as the ſimple, the natural, and unlabour'd dictates of an honeſt heart.

If it be aſked what could tempt the philoſopher, to divert from thoſe paths of fame, of religion and virtue, of candour and humanity, trodden by his predeceſſors in ſcience, and which hath conveyed their names with ſo much advantage, and honour, down to the

memory of later ages: To anſwer this it will be neceſſary, though a very diſagreeable taſk, to make a further enquiry into Lord Bolingbroke's moral character, as it appears in his philoſophical works; and from his profeſſed principles, we may naturally expect, a fuller expoſition of his paſſions.

"It is a very true obſervation, and a "very common one, that our affections "and paſſions have frequently a bias ſo "ſecret, and yet ſo ſtrong on our judg-"ments, as to make them ſwerve from "the direction of right reaſon*."

It is not indeed poſſible to produce a ſtronger, and more appoſite inſtance of the power and influence, which the moral fame and temper of the heart has upon the judgment and underſtanding, than the Lord Bolingbroke. His ſophiſms are ſo palpable, his miſrepreſentations ſo groſs, his inconſiſtencies ſo glaring and many, and his fallacies throughout ſo conſpicuous, that they

* Vol. II. p. 81.

cannot

cannot poſſibly impoſe upon any honeſt man, who is but tolerably acquainted with the art of reaſoning, and rudiments of literature; and yet they impoſe upon himſelf: He who could ſo well detect and expoſe the falſe reaſoning of others, lies perhaps moſt open to detection and cenſure, on the ſame account, of any writer that has yet appeared in the world.

It is evident enough from his diſpute with Damon, and his letter to Lord Bathurſt on Retirement, that he was fixed on his principles, before he commenced philoſopher; and as he charges the divines with ſtudying in order to believe, for which they have very good reaſon, ſo he has made it manifeſt beyond a doubt, that he ſtudied in order Not to believe.

Yet prejudice was leſs to be expected in Lord Bolingbroke, than in any other writer; becauſe no other writer ever declaimed ſo much againſt it; and yet you ſee it ſtain and diſfigure every part of his works.

He cannot introduce his ſubject on the ſtudy of hiſtory, but by an apology for free-

thinking; nor can profecute the ſubject of his letters, without inveighing againſt metaphyſical divines. In the ſpirit of patriotiſm he has thought it neceſſary to traduce Dr. Clarke, for maintaining what ten thouſand have maintained before him, the moral attributes of God. He cannot vindicate himſelf to Sir William Wyndham, from the accuſations of the Jacobite faction, without enlarging upon the intolerant and cruel ſpirit of Chriſtianity. — He cannot form his Patriot Prince, without indulging him in ſuch a licentiouſneſs of acting, as nothing but a licentiouſneſs in thinking can juſtify: In his Reflections on Exile, you have Fate and Fortune introduced as principal diſpoſers in human affairs.

He has told us ſomewhere, I think in his letters to lord Cornbury, how much a warm imagination and a party ſpirit are apt to corrupt the faith of hiſtory: Now it is certain that his lordſhip had a large ſhare of both; and as in the nature of things, they muſt corrupt the faith of philoſophy, as well as hiſtory, he has taught

taught us to pay as little regard to him, as he would have others to pay to the annals of the church. It was paſſion and prejudice that diſpoſed him, to charge vice upon the moſt virtuous, folly upon the wiſeſt, arrogance upon the moſt modeſt, and ignorance upon the moſt learned of mankind. How powerfully his prejudice wrought upon him, appears by his treatment of the Jews and Chriſtians, and of the two diſpenſations of their founders, and of thoſe who have written in their defence.

A Jew does not more abhor the meats forbidden by his law, than his lordſhip ſeems to abominate a Jew: The very name might be thought to imply nothing but falſehood in the words, and impiety in the deeds of him to whom it belongs.

Obſerve as an inſtance amongſt many, his treatment of Joſephus, whom his lordſhip firſt repreſents as attending Titus to the ſiege of Jeruſalem; by which, I conceive, he would inſinuate him to be a renegado or deſerter to the enemy, and therefore not deſerving of credit: but

ſoon

ſoon after, he is ſtyled a zealous Jew, and who had a common intereſt of country and religion, to diſguiſe and falſify the truth.

Now nothing can be more weak and injudicious, not to ſay partial and malicious, than this obſervation; and one might be almoſt tempted to ſuſpect, that lord Bolingbroke had never read the author he ſo roundly condemns: For Joſephus, in many of the quotations he has made on this occaſion, in ſupport, and as collateral evidence of the Jewiſh hiſtory, has ſhewn far more zeal than prudence, and more integrity than judgment; and had he been diſpoſed to forgery or falſehood, he would have forged ſomething more to the purpoſe, than thoſe citations, which appear to me by no means competent, or to anſwer the end, for which they are produced: But his materials, the more incompetent and indifferent they are, the more they illuſtrate the good faith and integrity of the compiler.

But

But lord Bolingbroke's treatment of Joſephus is only one inſtance among hundreds, that might be produced of the Philoſopher's reſpect to the ſeed of Abraham: He is never more loſt to regularity and order, than in his intemperate invectives againſt Moſes and the Jews: (from the conduct of the laſt in one period, he infers their general character at all times *:) Theſe he frequently draws unneceſſarily, or drags with violence, into his philoſophical reveries, and with the moſt abſurd cruelty, damns them for want of a philoſophy, to which they never pretended †. You have a remarkable inſtance of this, among many, in the 15th ſection of his fragments ‡, where treating of the migration of nations, he comes to conſider That of the Iſraelites from Egypt; where, after throwing as many difficulties as he can, in the way of the ſacred ſtory, he comes

* Vol. V. p. 278. † Letter to Mr. de Pouilly. ‡ Vol. IV. p. 86.

at

at laſt to give us the reaſon of this removal or expulſion, which he is inclined to believe, upon the authority of Pagan writ, to be an epidemical, infectious diſtemper; from whence he makes a tranſition to their ſtealing the goods of the Egyptians; and after he has made the moſt of theſe two thread-bare ſcandals, retailed from hand to hand, for ſome ages, by every low dabbler in the minute philoſophy, he proceeds to ſome rabbinical figments, which he gives us at length, and all with the honeſt purpoſe, of invidiouſly loading the ſacred records.

Upon other occaſions, he rails, like Sennacherib and his ſervants, on the Lord God of Iſrael; and ſpeaks againſt the God of Jeruſalem, as againſt the Gods of the people of the earth *: and though no man has more vehemently cenſured others for preſuming to judge of the ways of providence, yet he ſcruples not to condemn in the lump, the whole Jewiſh diſpenſation, becauſe it ſuits not his modern

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 17—19.

ideas;

ideas: And he impeaches Moſes, with all the virulence, and ſits in judgment upon his conduct, with as little mercy, as he would have done, or was accuſtomed to uſe, in cenſuring the meaſures of a modern adminiſtration; though the miniſter has ceaſed from the land of the living near four thouſand years. When the cenſor Cato was called to the bar, at the age of eighty ſix, he complained of it as very hard, that he ſhould be brought to juſtify to men of one generation, the actions he had performed in another before they were born †: — A complaint, that Moſes has certainly a much better right to prefer againſt our modern philoſopher and politician. His ſpecimen of the Moſaic hiſtory is made up of exaggeration, calumny, and partiality; and one might imagine, from his account of the ſupreme Being, that the Bible repreſented him without either natural, or moral attributes.

* Plut. Vol. III. p. 347.

If

If Moſes, or a Jew, comes acroſs him, appears at a diſtance, or can be brought by a ſide-glance, or overſtraining his ſight, within his proſpect, his whole frame ſeems ſhaken, he ſtops ſhort, turns out of the way, and purſues his new game, till he has run himſelf out of breath, and loſt ſight of the ſubject of his former enquiry; till he recollects from whence he digreſſed, and then like a river, which has diſcharged all its force by overflowing, he returns to his former courſe, and to ſome degree of temper. For like the knight of the Rock, he has ſometimes his temperate mood, but preſently the mad fit returns, and he aſſails, beats, bruiſes, and tramples under his feet, the perſon he firſt meets with, or whoever ſeems to contradict his ſentiments or paſſions.

In the beginning of his letter or eſſay, occaſioned by one of archbiſhop Tillotſon's ſermons, he makes indeed ſome ſhew of candour, reaſoning, and enquiry, but as he advances, he betrays himſelf, as already determined in the cauſe, whoſe

whoſe merits he would affect to examine. His prejudice in the progreſs ariſes to impotence and paſſion: tranſported with which, and as it were inflamed by the greateſt injury or affront, that could be offered to man; he deſcends below himſelf, and the dignity of the Philoſopher, to the virulence, ſcurrillity and rancour of a ſatiriſt, and a libeller: An invective againſt the lewdeſt, and moſt cruel rites or myſteries of Paganiſm, could not well have been carried higher than this of his lordſhip's againſt the Law, the Prophets, and the God of Iſrael; whom a ſtranger to the ſacred records, might from this author's repreſentation, ſuppoſe to have been ſome overgrown monſter of a tyrant, ſerved by none but banditti and aſſaſſins, formed and united by his laws, and ſent forth by his commiſſion, to ſpread blood and deſolation among mankind, or elſe a tutelary Deity of an inferior order to that of the Roman Lares.

That the Iſraelites had a leader called Moſes, he allows to be proved, by the conſent of foreign, whom we call collateral

teral witneſſes; — but further particulars of the Jewiſh hiſtory (except ſuch as occaſionally ſerve to traduce this people) he ſeems not to admit; though he might have extended his faith a great deal further, upon the authority of Strabo and Juſtin, (though only an abridgment of Trogus) and even of Tacitus himſelf, though a bigot, and remarkably prejudiced againſt the Jews. But the beſt evidence is of no weight or authority in their favour, while the worſt is ſufficient to invalidate their pretenſions, and to render their character and perſons odious.

How diſingenuous a part does his lordſhip act, and how much below himſelf, when he is ſo careful to retail to us, from ſuch writers as Suidas and Appion, the one a paultry grammarian, and the other a profeſſed and envenomed enemy to the Jews, abſurd and ſilly tales concerning this people, and their leader Moſes, as worthy of our regard, (for why elſe ſhould he retail them?) and yet be ſo careful to conceal the teſtimony and authority of Strabo, ſo much to the advantage

vantage of both, and an authority which he has ſo juſtly acknowledged, and founded ſo high upon another occaſion *? And is not this to act, as he has often acted, in the very character which he has been juſt now aſcribing to, and cenſuring in Rabbies and Theologians; — i. e. he admits the traditions that confirm his own opinions, and rejects or conceals thoſe that contradict them. Shall we call it prejudice, or by a worſe name, that he could treat the patriarch, as moſt craving and ſelf-intereſted, for deſiring only, "bread to eat, and raiment to put "on?" — This is the more extraordinary from an author, who has allowed his favourite character, and the favourite of Heaven, ordained by the deſignation of Providence, for the general benefit, and to be the guardian angel of mankind, to indulge in pleaſures †. — It were ſcarce

* Letters on Hiſtory, Vol. I. p. 78.

† The moſt illuſtrious life and character admits the full uſe of pleaſures. (Spirit of Patriotiſm,

ſcarce poſſible to believe his lordſhip ſerious in this laſt objection, did we not ſee how far his prejudices carry him on other occaſions; as it is not neceſſary to refer the reader of common ſenſe, and common equity to a diſcourſe of Mr. John Hales of Eaton, in praiſe of the piety and diſintereſtedneſs of this vow of Jacob.

His lordſhip's ſcandals are ſo bold, and his calumnies ſo impudent, upon other occaſions, that they blacken none but himſelf: I chuſe not to repeat or refute them; eſpecially ſome of his coarſer ſlanders, which, conſcious of their falſehood, he does not affirm, yet is not aſhamed to inſinuate to be true.

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tiſm, p. 30.) — The common, the ſenſual pleaſures, ſays this refiner upon, and enemy to patriarchal morals, to which nature prompts us, and to which therefore nature does not forbid, though ſhe ſhould always direct, are ſo far from being excluded from a life of buſineſs, that they are ſometimes neceſſary in it, and are always heightened by it: Thoſe of the table, &c. Vide Spirit of Patriotiſm, p. 291, 30, 31.

His

His prejudices againſt Chriſtianity, and its profeſſors, are not leſs apparent, than what he has expreſſed againſt the Jews, their leader, and their God. His malice to Chriſtianity is (notwithſtanding his profeſſions) the moſt virulent and unrelenting: And he ſeems to throw Ignatius to the wild beaſts at Rome, with as bitter a ſpirit of revenge, and as joyous a rancour, as the moſt zealous Pagan bigot could behold his execution.

Lord Bolingbroke's prejudice againſt religion in general, and Chriſtianity in particular, might ariſe perhaps from their morality, too high and refined for one who had been engaged ſo much in the commerce of the world; and he has ingenuouſly told us, once for all, (as he expreſſes it) that perfect ſchemes are not adapted to our imperfect ſtate; and that ſtoical morals and platonic politics are no better than amuſements for thoſe, who have had little experience in the affairs of the world, and who have much leiſure*.

* Patriot King, p. 91.

He who could admire, or affect to admire the death of Socrates, and the patience of Ariſtides, when ſpit upon as he was led to execution, could ſee no form or comelineſs, in a character, even in the way of human reaſoning, more innocent, more perfect, more baſely calumniated, and more ignominiouſly expoſed to inſult, as well as cruelty, than either! — What but prejudice of the ſtrongeſt kind could lead the philoſopher to make the moſt and beſt of what he calls the Æthiopian and Egyptian church? — and of the primitive faith of the Theban dynaſty; and to lick as clean as he could the monſtrous birth of Pagan idolatry and ſuperſtition; and at the ſame time to pick out with care, and retail with oſtentation, every abſurdity in opinion, and profanation in practice, admitted by particular perſons or ſects, and to overlook the unity of faith, purity of manners, and ſincere devotion, which generally prevailed in the firſt churches of God?—Indeed his whole ſcrutiny into the growth or progreſs of artificial theo-

logy,

logy, has more the air of a perſonal invective, than of a candid, ſerious and rational diſcuſſion.

The whole of what is ſaid upon the ſubject of inſpiration, in his firſt volume, ſcarce bears a ſerious air, but is wanton, ludicrous, and licentious, inſolent and malicious; and by this as by other parts of his works, it plainly appears he ſat down as a ſettled unbeliever, to confirm, and not as a doubting philoſopher, to aſcertain his ſentiments and opinions; and hence that variety of erudition, which is diſplayed upon this ſubject: His reading and induſtry for a courſe of years, ſeem to have been directed to this ſole end, and like aliment taken in by a diſtempered body, have by a prediſpoſition of humours been converted to the ſupport and nouriſhment of his ruling and ſettled principles: Otherwiſe it is impoſſible, that the writer could have impoſed upon himſelf, or attempted to impoſe upon others, by the trifling, and very fallacious obſervation that follows: "the

proofs that are brought a poſteriori for Chriſtian inſpiration, are not more deciſive for Chriſtians, than thoſe, which the Stoicians brought in favour of vatication and divination, were to them, nor than thoſe, which the Mahometans, and the worſhippers of Foe bring of the ſame kind, are to them*." Whereas would he have ſaid any thing to the purpoſe, it ſhould have been, that the proofs for original Chriſtian inſpiration, are not ſtronger, than thoſe produced for Heathen and Mahometan inſpiration: But this compariſon he knew would bear no debate; and ſo he chooſes to reſt the cauſe, not on the reaſonableneſs, but on the mere credulity of the ſeveral believers: As well might he have produced the vulgar Pagan faith, in the Metamorphoſis of Ovid, to invalidate the truth, and authority of Chriſtian miracles.

In reſpect to Chriſtianity in general: If we obſerve the many, repeated, and clear conceſſions his lordſhip has made of the

* Vol. I. p. 155.

blindneſs,

blindneſs, or weakneſs of human reaſon, the ſtrength and prevalency of the human paſſions and affections;—the authority of the law of nature, and man's inability to perform it;—the various and erroneous opinions, ariſing from ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm, and the refinements of ſcience, which have ſo much obſcured the truth, and genuine light of nature:—the misfortunes that attend on life, and baniſh happineſs from this imperfect ſtate;—what but the ſtrongeſt prejudices, and perverſeneſs could diſpoſe his lordſhip, after all this, to contend againſt revelation, which ſo exactly falls in with, and is ſo exactly ſuited to the wants of nature,—to baniſh its errors, to remedy its imperfections, to ſubdue the paſſions, and by ſtronger motives to make reaſon an over-balance for the depraved affections.

Beſides his prejudices, whenceſoever they aroſe, there ſeems to have been an ungovernable ſpirit, or, as I may call it, an incompreſſible flame in his conſtitution, a vehemence and impetuoſity in

his temper, which may be qualities proper enough, to enter into the compoſition of an inquiſitor, or the founder and propagator of ſome new enthuſiaſm, but are not the moſt requiſite to form a cool examiner, a patient or impartial judge.

Pride or vanity ſeems indeed to have prevailed ſtrongly, if not to predominate in his conſtitution: This appears from the pompous diſplay of his reading and erudition, and the pretenſions he has made to univerſal knowledge, with the novel paradoxes he has advanced, in oppoſition to the common ſenſe, and general ſentiments of mankind.

He had indeed been accuſtomed, for a great part of his life, to diſſent in his political capacity from the ſyſtem of meaſures in vogue: What wonder then, that when he commenced critic and philoſopher, he practiſed rules, "very diſ-"ferent from thoſe, which writers on "the ſame ſubject recommended*?"

* Study of Hiſt. p. 1.

And

And "oppoſed," as oppoſition had been his trade in politics, "in almoſt all he "ſaid, the greateſt names in philoſo-"phy?"—And he ſeems to triumph in the ſuppoſed debaſement of the human ſoul, for this reaſon among others, that he has, he imagines, confuted upon this ſubject, the greateſt men of the age*. What wonder then, that he ſhould declare, that he knew as much, as All, or any of thoſe dogmatical perſons, the divines†.

He expreſſes little diffidence of his own, but a ſovereign contempt of the opinions of others: As if ſeated upon ſome ſuperior eminence, or moving in an higher orb,—ſurrounded with a purer light, and taking in a more enlarged proſpect, he looks down not with pity, but diſdain, on the whole body of mankind, drudging below, ſons of earth, and ſlaves of dulneſs and ignorance, or roving at large, in the paths of folly and madneſs.

* Vol. I. p. 211. † Vol. IV. p. 319.

What

What he cannot do himſelf, he modeſtly concludes no other man can do; or in other words, what is above Lord Bolingbroke's, is above the comprehenſion of all mankind *.

That he writes like a Lord, is undeniable; but the lordſhip he exerciſes, is unbecoming the philoſopher;—a monopoly of the whole province of ſenſe and literature in the world:—Not a lord but a tyrant, he treats all about him as pedants and ſlaves, and liable to his contempt and condemnation, for diſobedience to his ſovereign dictates in the Firſt Philoſophy: Jealous as the Sultan, he murders every name of diſtinction, that might ſeem to rival his fame; and infallible as the Pope, but more uncharitable, he fulminates his cenſures againſt all, who have not conformed to his holy deciſions, even before they were promulged †. He has all along the air and tone of a maſter, and calls not prieſts and philo-

* Vol. I. p. 120. † See Firſt Philoſ. p. 7, 8.

ſophers

ſophers alone, but kings and emperors to his ſovereign tribunal, to be reprimanded for their faults and follies. He has indeed made himſelf the moſt conſiderable perſonage of any that have appeared in later ages, or perhaps in any, ſince the creation. You are to behold in Lord Bolingbroke the criterion of what was true in religion, orthodox in divinity, equitable in law, wiſe in policy, valuable in letters, and good in conſcience.

The limited faculties, and imperfect knowledge of man are the conſtant leſſon he inculcates; and he derives much of human error and unhappineſs, from the attempts made to go beyond our line: Yet ſcarce a writer has yet appeared in the world, whom his lordſhip would not be thought to ſurpaſs in ſcience and genius, and whom he has not actually ſurpaſſed by his obſervations at large, and the boldeſt paradoxes, in the introduction of the moſt wretched ſcepticiſm. Under the maſk of expoſing human ignorance, he would demonſtrate his own title to

ſuperior

ſuperior knowledge; and while he profeſſes to humble human pride, he betrays his own frantic ambition. Virtue and truth were the objects of common acqueſt and enquiry among the ancients: My Lord's is to demonſtrate our ignorance and imperfections. The academic alone doubted of all things, or pretended to doubt, while he was no leſs a dogmatiſt than any of them; and while he would convince all of their blindneſs, aſſumed to himſelf the ſole property of ſcience: and herein lord Bolingbroke has faithfully followed him.

A great part of his works is mere oſtentation of his learning, and has not the leaſt tendency to inſtruct, or benefit mankind. The notions of both ancient and modern Philoſophers, about which his lordſhip is ſo critical and tedious, have been long ſince exploded; and we are in no danger that I know of from either Des Cartes, Plato, or father Malebranche; nor at all intereſted in the diviſions and ſubdiviſions of the ſchools. My Lord has done here, what many a great

great ſcholar has done before him, Leibnitz in particular, disburthened his memory of much wealth, of little worth, either to the writer or the reader, having loſt its currency.

Nothing is more the object of his lordſhip's declamation, than the preſumption and vanity of Chriſtian theologians; yet nothing certainly leads man ſo effectually to the knowledge of his own meanneſs and debaſement, as Chriſtian theology; whilſt our higheſt exaltation, on the ſcheme of revelation, takes away all boaſting, as it is "God that worketh in "us, both to will and to do." Whom then ſhall we call moſt impious and preſumptuous? He, who ſenſible of his own ignorance and infirmity, expects light and ſtrength from God alone; or he, who under the ſame ſenſibility, preſcribes bounds to the divine mercy, and will ſtand by his own ſtrength, and be wiſe by his own wiſdom? — No man is more humble, if we will take his word for it, than the Philoſopher; yet no man more aſſuming and ſelf ſufficient, if we

we examine his ſentiments and conduct: he is his own helper and inſtructor, and denies even to the power of God, a poſſibility to aſſiſt him. With affected modeſty and reverence he would be thought, not to dare to define, or deſcribe the all-perfect Being by his attributes, or to know more of him than his exiſtence, or (at other times) at moſt, his infinite wiſdom and power: Yet with unabaſhed effrontery, he roundly aſſerts, as if taught of Heaven, the meaſure of thoſe attributes, and preſcribes to God, as He did to the ocean, "Hitherto ſhalt thou "go, and no further." Thus, he is at the ſame time dogmatiſt and ſceptic; with whom reaſon is all-ſufficient, though he is ignorant of all things.

But vanity has ever been extravagant, opinionative, and preſumptuous: and we trace the ſame effects from the ſame paſſion, as circumſtances concur, in every character that hiſtory preſents us with.—The lord Digby's character has a very near reſemblance to that of our noble author's, in many particulars: The fol-

lowing extract of it, may be ſufficient to our preſent purpoſe; "he had great elo-
"quence and becomingneſs in his diſ-
"courſe, (ſave that ſometimes he ſeemed
"a little affected) and of ſo univerſal a
"knowledge, that he never wanted a
"ſubject for diſcourſe: He was equal to
"a very good part in the greateſt affairs,
"but the unfitteſt man alive to conduct
"them; having an ambition and vanity
"ſuperior to all his other parts, and a
"confidence in himſelf, which ſome-
"times intoxicated, and tranſported,
"and expoſed him *."

Lord Bolingbroke tells us, "that the
"greateſt genii had ſuffered violence in
"all ages, whilſt out of regard to their
"own characters, they have ſubmitted
"to the judgment of the age, and of
"the populace †." But his lordſhip, knowing his own ſtrength, was above ſuch vulgar prejudices. No fear or favour has hindered him from taking all advantages, which a full expoſition of

* Clar. Vol. I. p. 343. † Vol. I. p. 239.

the

the truth could give him. He has played arms of every kind, fair and foul, without any reſerve; ſo that if he has not gotten himſelf the victory, he has neither his modeſty, nor cowardice, to lay the blame on. He contemns all the forms of decency, and breaks out through all civil reſtraints in vindication of his freedom. "Bacon, his lordſhip tells us, would give no offence;" — and "Locke had a ſtrange timidity of temper;" but our Philoſopher is for declaring nothing, or the whole truth, as if to deliver his ſoul: He gave the full reins to his genius, and the lateſt poſterity may bleſs their ſtars, for his immenſe diſcoveries.

He further pretends, that the reſpect men pay to revelation, ſcreens divines from being attacked ſo directly, and in ſo many ways, as they would be otherwiſe, and as they deſerve to be *. Yet it is certain, his lordſhip has ſpared no ways or means, to attack both their per-

* Vol. IV. p. 351.

ſons,

ſons, and their principles; and if they remain yet undemoliſhed, it is not owing to the Philoſopher's reſpect for revelation.

Upon occaſions, he is not free, but raſh, — not bold, but blaſphemous; and his paradoxes are ſo paradoxical, that our ſurprize is loſt in contempt for the author, and his abſurdities. His wit ſometimes loſes all its delicacy, by a rudeneſs, and blunt and bold ſatire, which diſguſts, more than it pleaſes; and where we ſay of others, that they write with ſpirit, we may ſay of the noble Lord, that he writes with a vengeance. — He is not pathetic, but paſſionate, not ſtrong, but vehement and violent; and cuts down his enemies, as it were with the ſword of a tyrant, rather than examines and determines with the calmneſs and impartiality of a judge.

He was a wit, and has ſhewn it abundantly: But the affectation of ſhewing it, has led him, as it will lead every man of the ſame turn, into bold falſehoods,

and very groundleſs concluſions. The Philoſopher and the droll differ not more, than wit and wiſdom: the one means to inſtruct you, the other to entertain you: here the author ſtrikes you; there, the ſubject: The author of the Analogy of Nature, for inſtance, would work your conviction: the patron of the Firſt Philoſophy calls for your admiration. Wiſdom is ſevere, modeſt, and chaſte: wit is frolic, bold, and licentious, — will blaſpheme God, and ſport with damnation and hell, for the ſake of the joke.

His laboured proof of the exiſtence of God, in the letter to Mr. de Pouilly, is a true ſpecimen of his lordſhip's genius: He would ſay ſomething new, ſomething which recommends his own ſuperior parts, and far exceeds, amends, and condemns what has been ſaid by others in philoſophy and religion: — ſomething, wherein you may obſerve the writer, more than the cauſe, and lord Bolingbroke may make a more conſpicuous figure, than the God he defends. You have here the Philoſopher in epitome;—

general

general calumny againſt Moſes, and the Jews, in order to prove the Being of God, and the creation of the world by him; — a great diſplay of erudition in ancient hiſtory, ancient and modern philoſophy, and divinity: — You have preſumption, blaſphemy and abſurdity, under the name of modeſty, religion and reaſon: and the defence of the Creator made out, by ſuch a chain of arguments, as would leave the greateſt part of mankind, quite ignorant of his exiſtence.

But as his lordſhip was "above com-" mon-place notions," it cannot be ſuppoſed he wrote for the common capacity; and if his proof be ſingular, it matters little, whether it be true or not. Refinement may atone for falſehood, and genius ſupply the place of reaſon. God, the Creator, is indeed aſſerted; but at the bottom it is old mother Nature, (per ſe dabat omnia tellus) with her foſter-father the Sun *, that carries on, and compleats the work of Creation; and

* See p. 296, 7, &c. and 299.

theſe, in fact, could be aſſigned, upon his lordſhip's argument, as the only cauſes, by the ſuppoſed ſpectators, of the effects produced: and his lordſhip's defence taken together, ends in a denial of God.

What confidence he had in himſelf, and what regard for the reſt of mankind, appears from hence, that he makes the beſt of them, no better than brutes, and the wiſeſt, no other than madmen; The miſery, the folly, the madneſs of the moſt diſtinguiſhed, are the ſubject of his peculiar inſult and triumph; while with the greateſt affected humility and diffidence of his own parts, he would paſs himſelf upon the world, for a giant in politics, (where he was indeed above the common ſize) a giant in learning, a giant in philoſophy, natural and moral, and a giant in theology; for almoſt every champion that has appeared upon the ſtage, on any of theſe ſubjects, he either attempts to wound, or demoliſh: If, upon occaſion, he allows an able writer, it is, that he may gain the more honour,

by

by knocking him on the head. It was pride, that prompted him to demoliſh, rather than build. Methinks, I ſee him with effrontery and pride, with ſcorn and contempt, raiſing himſelf aloft, upon the ruins of what the wit and learning of two thouſand years had been erecting: With matchleſs pride and ſelf-ſufficiency he contends for human ignorance and infirmity; and is reſolved to gain the character of ſuperior knowledge, by proving that he has no ſoul. We may therefore juſtly ſuſpect and deſpiſe, both his principles and learning, as called in to juſtify his practice, and diſplay his parts.

Lord Bolingbroke indeed ſeems to have owed his infidelity to his pride, and his paſſions: His reaſon was on the ſide of Chriſtianity: He has acknowledged it, as he has proclaimed the irrefragable evidence of revelation, by the ſophiſtry, the falſehood, the ignorance, and malice, which he has employed to diſcredit it. I charge not his lordſhip with want of faith in his principles, and inſincerity in his

infidelity; or that he has made uſe of arguments, knowing them to be falſe or futile; though I know not what motives could reſtrain a man, who diſavows all principles of religion, from uſing any weapons, good or bad, for the ſupport of any cauſe he is engaged in. But the truth is, the ſame paſſions that made, continued to operate, in maintaining him an unbeliever: And we know, that when Paſſion rides in triumph, Reaſon muſt drag the chain. Infidelity however has no ſuch charms, by his lordſhip's own confeſſion, as ſhould tranſport a man with ardour and confidence to devote his life and labours, in its defence and propagation: Nor was it a deſire to promote the common good, and public happineſs, or the advancement of public or private virtue, that could engage him in theological, or philoſophical embroils; for upon all theſe, infidelity has the moſt inauſpicious and baneful influence. It was not certainly a divine, and I believe it will be impoſſible to aſſign any other human

human cauſe, for his lordſhip's extraordinary appearance upon this occaſion, than that of pride: It was this, that equally inflamed him againſt the ſyſtem of adminiſtration, and the ſyſtem of Chriſtianity,—againſt St. Paul, and Sir Robert Walpole; they both ſtood in the way of his ambition. But the adminiſtration was a ſyſtem, if it may be ſo called, whoſe exiſtence at longeſt could be but that of one age, and conſequently its demolition be attended with a limited glory. It therefore claimed only an under part in his lordſhip's literary lucubrations. But religion had been in long poſſeſſion, and co-eval with the foundations of the earth:—Its influence extended over barbarous nations, and incorporated with the firſt principles of policy, and civil government:—Its authority had been ſubmitted to by tyrants—revered by the wiſe—embraced by the virtuous, and ſupported by the learned; and however men might differ in particular opinions, yet the grand articles of faith,

the being of a God, and his providence, and the expectation of a future ſtate, had been equally admitted, and exerciſed a kind of univerſal empire over the minds and conſciences of men:—Here to root up, and to deſtroy, was a conqueſt not over an age, a province or a nation, but over all the generations and kingdoms of the earth,—over laws and eſtabliſhments, —over wiſdom, virtue and ſcience, over nature and man:—A triumph this, worthy the ambition of a Bolingbroke.

Pride ſoars at large, and Envy its common attendant directs its baneful influence at the higheſt perfection: For pride would be ſole proprietor of whatever is eminent and admired, and murder like Herod whatever might be incompatible with its own ſingular greatneſs:—Hence his lordſhip's ſpleen and virulence againſt almoſt every celebrated name, and diſtinguiſhed character that has appeared in the world. He profeſſes to have oppoſed in almoſt all he has ſaid, men of the greateſt name in philoſophy:* This

* Vol. I. p. 120. is

is very true, and perhaps was the main deſign of his philoſophizing. Hence he took occaſion to traduce at leaſt Plato and Ariſtotle among the ancients, and among the moderns, Malebranche, Des Cartes, Biſhop Berkley, Leibnitz and Bacon, and almoſt every learned name, except Democritus, Anaxagoras, and others of the material and mechanical tribe, whether Theiſts, Atomites, or Atheiſts: Clarke, Woolaſton, Warburton, and even his maſter Locke in the preſent century, Tillotſon and Cudworth in the laſt, Moſes and Joſephus amongſt the Jews, Socrates and Plato among the Greeks, and Tully among the Romans, have all been treated by his lordſhip with a contempt, in proportion, as it might ſeem, to the credit and reputation they bore with the reſt of the world; and had they been leſs eminent, they had been below his ſovereign animadverſion. He alone would be thought to poſſeſs without a rival "that vaſt imperious "mind," in the words of Tillotſon,

"which

" which commands all the knowledge of " nature and art, of words and things, " attains to a maſtery in all languages, " and ſounds the depths of all arts and " ſciences, meaſures the earth and the " heavens, and tells the ſtars, and de- " clares their orders and motions; diſ- " courſes of the intereſts of all ſtates, " the intrigues of all courts, the reaſon " of all civil laws and conſtitutions, and " gives an account of the hiſtory of all " ages †."

From this aſſumed ſuperiority of knowledge, we may derive that air of inſolence, which he takes upon himſelf, that impatience of contradiction which he betrays, and that obloquy and contempt he ſo frankly pours upon thoſe, who are guilty of it unwittingly: All are preſumptuous dogmatiſts, (though the moſt modeſt men living in their day) who have differed from the abſolute will and pleaſure of this new dictator, who was

† Tillotſon, folio, p. 5, 6.

to

to ariſe in the empire of letters, though of his future glory and kingdom they had no notice, nor had any of the prophets foretold.

The moſt virtuous cannot eſcape his cenſure, nor the moſt learned his correction; nay the more learned and the more virtuous, the more they ſeem to provoke his cenſure and indignation. The ſpirit of patriotiſm might, one would expect, have been ſome excuſe for the extravagance of virtue, in the younger Cato. His conduct, formed on the principles of probity, rather than policy, and a zeal that puſhed him on through life to ſeek the intereſt of his country, and devoted him in death to the manes of public liberty, ſhould have entitled him to the peculiar applauſe of a patriot writer. But Cato himſelf was too much a patriot, and too little a politician, to meet with the full approbation of Lord Bolingbroke. Hear what his lordſhip ſays in that letter, which might be conſidered as a monument,

whereon

whereon Cato's figure might have made the principal figure:—"That he erred in "his conduct, by giving way too much "to the natural roughneſs of his temper, "and by allowing too little to that of the "Romans, among whom luxury had "long prevailed, and corruption was "openly practiſed, is moſt true. He "was incapable of employing thoſe "ſeeming compliances, that are recon-"cileable to the greateſt ſteadineſs, and "treated unſkilfully a crazy conſtitu-"tion ‡."

Next to an innate pride, we may perhaps conſider his lordſhip's practice, as a politician, as contributing not a little to the malignity of temper, which betrays itſelf through all his works.

What an unhappy effect a party ſpirit has upon the temper, the candour, the ingenuity and honour of the champions engaged, appears from daily obſervation by the groundleſs inſinuations, invidious

‡ Spirit of Patriotiſm, p. 35.

compariſons,

compariſons, the abſurd falſehoods, the bold ſcandals, and virulent invectives publiſhed, and propagated againſt perſons of the firſt name, and the higheſt and moſt unexceptionable characters: and thoſe who have brought themſelves to a habit of thinking, and practiſing all things as lawful and expedient, that may conduce to diſtreſs their enemies in a political altercation, will not, we preſume, be very conſcientious in the choice of their arguments, or ſevere in the obſervation of truth and reaſon in a philoſophic debate. The man thoroughly engaged in the arts and practices of party, is prepared to defend any cauſe, and to make uſe of any arms, the arms and cauſe of hell not excepted:—And on whatever ſide reaſon and truth are wanting, you obſerve more fraud and falſehood, more artifice and malice, more virulence and rage employed, to ſupply the want of argument, and to give breath to the reſentment, contracted from a ſenſe of a bad or baffled cauſe; till a

habit of malignity is gradually contracted, which infects the whole man and his communication: The arts and animoſities, which he had once only exerted againſt the camp of an enemy, he comes at laſt to practiſe in his ordinary rencounters with the reſt of mankind.

Lord Bolingbroke's reſtleſs genius, being in ſome meaſure deprived of its province, in politics and buſineſs, betook itſelf to theory: and as he thought himſelf ill-uſed in the political, he carried his reſentments along with him into the philoſophical world. The ſpirit of party had long engaged him againſt the miniſter, and againſt his other political adverſaries. His fortune in life, his perſonal and political circumſtances might contribute to the ill humour and malevolence, which appears in almoſt every page of his writings: He had been diſappointed in his ſchemes, or however degraded from the rank he once held, and the ſhare he had poſſeſſed of ambition and power: He conceived himſelf ill-uſed by his enemies, and by his friends,

friends, by Whigs and Tories, and lived for many years deſpoiled of that dignity, and diſtinction, to which he might think himſelf entitled; and excluded from that ſphere of activity, wiſdom and eloquence, in which he might have ſhone with diſtinguiſhed luſtre: All this it appears he felt very ſenſibly: The bill of attainder, he ſcarce need have told us, tingled in every vein *.

By cenſuring the meaſures of miniſters, he ſeems to have become habitually captious, when he entered upon the buſineſs of examining the ſentiments of divines. And as, unhappy for Old England, the times went from bad to worſe, by not following his lordſhip's ſovereign directions, he grew outragious, as he grew old, and poured out his gall in torrents, againſt churchmen and the church, which he had been collecting againſt ſtateſmen and the ſtate: As Mr. Prynne is ſaid to have contracted his irreverence for the government of the

* Letter to Sir William Wyndham.

ſtate,

ſtate, from the proud and venemous diſlike he had before contracted to the diſcipline of the church of England *.

How ſtrongly did paſſion and political prejudice work upon him, who could condemn the learning, whoſe profeſſor went, and becauſe he went to court: the ſcholar muſt be ſneered, becauſe his patron was a Princeſs; and forgetful of all the decencies of life, he deſcends below himſelf in pouring † contempt upon this diſtinguiſhed Princeſs, for qualities, that gave a new luſtre to her crown.

Lord Bolingbroke, heated by, and habituated to altercation in politics, eaſily commenced a warm polemic in philoſophy, and from a diſpoſition contracted to find every thing wrong in the ſtate, was inſenſibly diſpoſed to find nothing right in the church: And after a long

* See Clarendon, vol. I. p. 199.

† If I have preſſed you a little warmly, yet I have done it with the decency that every gentleman owes to another, at leaſt to himſelf. — Ded. to the Diſſertation on Parties, p. 26.

practice

practice of ſeverity and cenſure againſt meaſures of the government, it was not eaſy to aſſume a coolneſs and candour in his treatment of opinions and doctrines of a different eſtabliſhment. He came heated and enraged into the ſchools, and has treated Socrates and Tully, and every other illuſtrious name of Pagan or Chriſtian antiquity, in the ſame, or a more outrageous manner, than he did Sir Robert Walpole: It was indeed more ſafe, though leſs generous, to inſult the dead than the living, and his paſſions not having perhaps their full ſcope, againſt him whom he might think the proper object of his reſentment, burſt out with more violence againſt thoſe, who ſtood next in the way of his diſlike: Hence knavery and folly, which are commonly applied to the conductors and principal agents in weak, or a wicked adminiſtration, are ſo liberally beſtowed on the miſtakes or reveries of the peaceful philoſopher, the poor ſaint, or the ſincere enthuſiaſt. Indeed his acrimony, and bitterneſs againſt ſchool-divines or

theologians, is altogether unreaſonable and diſproportioned, to the cauſe and provocation they have given him: they were in general a mortified and modeſt race of men, retired in their cells and colleges, in queſt of what they thought the real truth, and in promoting the will and knowledge of God.

Indeed his whole ſcrutiny into the growth or progreſs of artificial theology, has more the air of perſonal invective, than of a ſerious and rational diſquiſition. — Ancient fathers and modern doctors might ſeem, from his lordſhip's treatment of them, to have been miniſters, not of the church but of the ſtate: — his rivals in power, who had ſupplanted him in place, and who had done, and ſtill continued to do him the greateſt prejudice, in reſpect of his character, honour, and fortune: He is, therefore, active in the ſearch, triumphs in the diſcovery, and ſhews himſelf maliciouſly gay, and inſolently witty in the report of any miſtake, or miſconduct in their life and writings.

writings. Nor is this all. The ſuppoſed fault of one man is ſufficient with him to damn the whole profeſſion: And if Jaquelet is miſtaken, divines are all impoſtors. Yet how handſomely does lord Bolingbroke expreſs himſelf on another occaſion: "It would be hard indeed, "if parties were to be characterized, "not by their common view, or the "general tenour of their conduct, but "by the private views imputed to ſome "amongſt them, or by the particular "fallies, into which miſtake, ſurprize "or paſſion hath ſometimes betrayed "the beſt intentioned, and even the beſt "conducted bodies of men *." If the noble author had been thus equitable in judging of the conduct of Chriſtians in general, and of the conduct of the Chriſtian clergy in particular, he had ſaved himſelf much trouble, with no loſs of credit, to his candor or honeſty. But he had been accuſtomed to form invidi-

* Diſſertation on Parties, p. 53.

ous compariſons, betwixt ancient and modern princes and miniſters, and from a ſuppoſed ſimilitude in ſome one circumſtance, to inſinuate an uniformity of character throughout. Having been long verſed in this art of ſcandal, as a politician, it was difficult for him, perhaps he could not eaſily lay it aſide, when he commenced Philoſopher; and if, as lord Clarendon aſſures us, "men "of activity and faction, contract a ha- "bit of ill-nature and diſingenuity, ne- "ceſſary to their affairs;" we may naturally trace our Philoſopher's ſpleen, and illiberal, and diſingenuous manner, from his former practice, as a ſtateſman.

The Philoſopher ſhews indeed more charity to the theiſt, who aſcribes the government; and even to the atheiſt, who aſſigns the creation of the world, to matter and motion, than to the theologian or divine: And Strabo, Democritus, and even Epicurus have much better quarter from him than Plato, Cudworth, Woolaſton, Warburton, or Clarke.

The

The reaſon of this different treatment he very honeſtly gives us: — Democritus, and the others who were employed on material, and mechanical cauſes, excluded Deity, and thereby more ſucceſsfully ſtudied Nature: But Plato and his followers admitted God, and final and intentional cauſes.

But his malice and rancour was not confined to particular perſons and parties: they breathe through all his eſſays; and it is plain he thought himſelf ill-uſed by ſome, and was thence led to take revenge on all mankind. Not a name of eminence in the lettered world has eſcaped his malignant cenſures: And if even Bacon, Des Cartes, and Locke, purged the fields of knowledge, of many weeds, they neglected however, he tells us, to grub the roots, "or helped to "preſerve them*." He has reſpect for none, except it be ſuch a man as Pelagius, a heretic in the church, or Diagoras an atheiſt; as his keeneſt arrows are

* Vol. I. p. 122.

levelled againſt the profeſſors of Judaiſm and Chriſtianity.

His reflections are frequently too general, and include without exceptions, whole bodies or ſocieties of men: And his lordſhip pours cenſure, as God does ſhowers and ſunſhine, on the evil and the good, on the juſt and unjuſt. Thus he has treated the whole profeſſion of the law; ninety-nine in a hundred at leaſt being, in his lordſhip's opinion, and in Tully's words, no better than "leguleius quidam, cautus & acutus, "præco actionum, cantor formularum, "auceps ſyllabarum." The profeſſors of the Goſpel will not, I ſuppoſe, think themſelves more obliged to him: For though he has aſſerted, that the national religion muſt be maintained in reputation and reverence, yet he has treated the miniſters of this profeſſion, with peculiar contempt and obloquy, — the moſt diſtinguiſhed for learning and candor, the defenders of natural, as well as of revealed religion, the reformed, as well as the Romiſh clergy: — The tribe,

as

as he calls them, are treated, in general, by him, with ſo peculiar a keenneſs, and ſo unrelenting a malice, that he may ſeem to be maintaining a private and perſonal quarrel againſt them, not a public cauſe; and that he was revenging ſome particular injury done, or indignity offered him, upon the whole order.

In that malevolence, that is diſtinguiſhed through all his writings, for the clergy to have expected mercy, had been to expect a miracle. They are, dark as is his lordſhip's portrait of human nature, the darkeſt figures in the piece: And ſo great is his lordſhip's faith, upon this occaſion, (as the hiſtory of Moſes is always true, when it ſerves to ſupport his own opinions, or to abuſe the God Jehovah, his people or Prophets) that a writer, not worthy of his credit in any other cauſe, is reſpectable for his teſtimony, when he recites the enormities of the clergy *. Nay, his lordſhip would perſuade us, from the confeſſion of Chriſtian fathers

* Vide vol. III. p. 166. note.

and prieſts, that there was neither ſenſe, nor piety, left among that body *.

At other times, he repreſents the whole body, as politic knaves, or cunning impoſtors, or bigotted perſecutors, becauſe ſome of their members have been acted by an imprudent zeal, ſelfiſh ends, or a factious and ambitious ſpirit; he excepts, indeed, ſome few good and learned men †: Yet upon other occaſions, he has ſet the ſuppoſed miſtakes of theſe, in ſuch a light, as if he had a mind to perſuade the world, that they were fools only, and not knaves; — blind and devout bigots, though no hypocrites; and if public miniſters were immoral and profligate, the hermit and anchorite were enthuſiaſtic, ſuperſtitious, and melancholy. But 'tis no wonder, after attempting to crucify the Son of God a ſecond time, he ſhould give no quarter to his ſervants.

But whatever provocation Chriſtian and modern doctors might have given

* Vol. III. p. 164, 5, 6. † Ibid. p. 175.

him, the ſages of antiquity could certainly be guilty of no perſonal offence or affront to his lordſhip; and yet he has ſhewn no more mercy and candor to theſe than to the former. It is laid to the charge of Socrates, that he was not an original, — that he wanted ſucceſs in his moral teaching; — Tully's authority in commending him is diſputed, and the moſt ſenſeleſs calumnies againſt him are adopted. Plato is a bombaſt poet, and a mad theologian! — What is blameable in Ariſtotle and Plato he charges upon themſelves, and is not to be charged, he ſays, upon thoſe who went before them, and whoſe books we have not in our hands: but what is valuable in theſe Philoſophers, eſpecially Plato and Socrates, is ſuppoſed to be borrowed from their predeceſſors, though we have no more proof for this, than for the former ſuppoſition.

Bacon, he tells us, borrowed from others, and both he and Locke, his favourites, thoſe great luminaries of ſcience, have their ſpots. He likewiſe tells us,

us, that the Engliſh and French Suns both had their ſpots, and, if they diſpelled ſome miſts, they raiſed others. If Newton is allowed to have made admirable diſcoveries, by the application of geometry to phyſics, and his new ſyſtem is not owing to the hypotheſis of Des Cartes, yet the introduction of geometry into phyſics muſt be acknowledged due to the French Philoſopher. He tells us *, that Malebranche is a fine genius, wrought up to a degree of madneſs; the African father, St. Auſtin, as mad as he. He ſeems to wiſh, that the writings of Ariſtotle and Plato had been deſtroyed or loſt, as it would have conduced to the advancement of knowledge. Thus, Tartar-like, he levels his fatal arrows againſt every name of diſtinction in the learned world, with the intent, it ſhould ſeem, that all the merit of the defunct ſhould center in himſelf; and both the dead and living fall in one common ſa-

* Vol. I. p. 250.

crifice,

crifice, to immortalize the fame of our Philoſopher.

He reckons the diſcoveries of our ignorance among the principal advantages of our modern diſcoveries *. And though it muſt be acknowledged, that he has ſaid, or would ſeem to ſay ſomething in favour of the moderns; yet he has at the ſame time moſt invidiouſly † detracted from modern diſcoveries and proficiency in ſcience: and as neither paſt, nor preſent have known, ſo he ſeems, if not to prophecy, yet to preſage, that no future age ſhall know more than lord Bolingbroke.

He however applauds that candor and good-will, which the Philoſophers of different ſects maintained in their diſputes towards each other, but did not reflect that he has traduced every diſtinguiſhed name amongſt them, and here only is liberal in his encomium, that he may the more expoſe the intolerant ſpirit of Chriſtian Philoſophers and theologians.

* Vol. I. p. 90. † Vol. I. p. 50, 55.

He

He ſeems to have read the annals of Chriſtianity, with a view to collect all the abſurdities in opinion, and immorality and impiety in practice, that might by any means diſcredit the Chriſtian church. He ſeems to have read the philoſophers ancient and modern with the ſame candid intention, in order to diſgrace all the efforts of human reaſon; and he gives ſuch characters of the beſt men of the Heathen world, as if he had no other deſign but to ſtigmatize every diſtinguiſhed effort of human worth. His works are a libel upon mankind, under which, however, the ſufferers may comfort themſelves, that the libeller was moſt diſtinguiſhed for virtue, of any of his kind, and had nothing in view, but a general reformation of manners.

But there is ſomething very abſurd, as well as unkind, in our general critic and inquiſitor's conduct, in thus examining the writings of his predeceſſors and cotemporaries, in order to diſcover their faults: For beſides, that he might with equal candor and equity, have expected

pected impeccability in their lives, as infallibility in their ſentiments, this ſevere inquiſition and general cenſure is peculiarly prepoſterous in him, who has ſo frequently acknowledged, and pleaded for the limited and imperfect knowledge, the frail and fallible reaſon, and impotent will of man, whoſe miſtakes ſhould not therefore have been aggravated into crimes, as perfection is allowed, and inſiſted upon by his lordſhip, as incompatible with our ſtate and nature.—Let lord Bolingbroke's philoſophy, I do not ſay his life, undergo this ſcrutiny, and be examined by the ſtandard of juſt logic, the laws of morality, and the teſt of truth, and to this he has, by his own conduct and writings, challenged mankind; you will find in him as little virtue, and not fewer errors, than in any author he has cenſured;—Epicurus not excepted,—whoſe morals he has openly adopted, with ſo much of his phyſics, as excludes God's agency from the government of this, and from all interpoſition,

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and favour, or reward in any future world.

It is not worth while, to obſerve upon his lordſhip's flowers of rhetoric, gathered at Billinſgate, to adorn and enliven his productions: Let us remember what he has ſaid of his adverſaries in the political world, acting the ſame dirty part: "They aſſume, ſays he, the privilege "of water-men, and oyſter-women: let "them enjoy it in that good company, "and excluſively of all other perſons: "They cauſe no ſcandal; they give no "offence: they raiſe no ſentiment, but "of contempt, in the breaſts of thoſe "they attack*."—However, our philoſopher's ſimilar conduct, and his illiberal abuſe of every illuſtrious name he mentions, (the more illuſtrious the name, the more illiberal the abuſe, and the more keen and coarſe his calumnies) may ſuggeſt to us this reflection; that neither nobleneſs of birth, nor the education of a court, nor great natural abilities, nor

* Ded. to the Diſſertation on Parties, p. 24.

knowledge

knowledge acquired by travel and by books, by converſation with the living and the dead, are able to ſubdue the malignity of the heart, or to inſpire that charity, " which thinketh no evil, and " ſpeaketh no evil of his neighbour:"— and that Lord Bolingbroke had been a politer gentleman, had he been a better Chriſtian; as Chriſtianity has in it none of thoſe properties, " that are neceſſary " to conſtitute a ſcold;—ill manners, im- " pudence, a foul mouth, and a fouler " heart."

From the noble lord's admiration of Tacitus, a congenial ſoul, political, vain, and ſceptical, he might contract or improve his own malignity; for there is ſcarce a character in either, free from cenſure: The philoſopher is only more ſcurrilous, and more in a rage, having ſo many madmen to deal with, as well as fools and knaves. He is not angry, but paſſionate and choleric; and in the height of his fury, loſes not only the faculties of reaſoning and diſtinguiſhing, but all regard

regard to common decency, and the moſt palpable truths.

But beſides this, his philoſophic character, if we may ſuppoſe him to be true to his own principles, naturally diſpoſes him to chagrin, diſcontent and rancor.

He comes into the world at all adventures, and ſhall hereafter be, as if he had never been: He is certain of little in life, and of nothing after it, but that he ſhall periſh everlaſtingly; In the mean time he is confined to a world, where neither goodneſs nor juſtice rule;—a world, which was not made for him, but which ſeems in many reſpects the Bedlam of every other ſyſtem of intelligent creatures; and with this unlucky circumſtance, that they who are moſt mad, govern, in things of the greateſt importance, thoſe who are leaſt ſo; (though I think he had before ſuppoſed it placed in the rank of other planets belonging to other ſyſtems;)—a world wherein men of the greateſt genius have been often tranſported to metaphyſical delirium, and religious enthuſiaſm:—In ſhort, a world abounding

abounding with little elſe, but fools and knaves; the one of which muſt provoke his contempt, and the other his indignation. In ſuch a world, almoſt every man he meets is an enemy, and he has accordingly declared war againſt him.

Could any man betray more malevolence to his kind, than his lordſhip, in admitting and expoſing the weakneſs and extravagance of human reaſon, and at the ſame time denying us the uſe of a divine revelation?—In acknowledging the blindneſs, impotence and irregularity of human paſſions, while he takes away what only can reſtrain and regulate them,—the influence and authority of divine commands;—and in ſurveying and aggravating the baſeneſs and wretchedneſs of human nature, and of our preſent mortal being, while he calls us off from all hope of an advancement or retribution, in a ſtate future and immortal. It is not enough with him, that death delivers us from our pains, unleſs he acquaints us, that it deprives us of our pleaſures; and as for our advantages in life, and

our boaſted prerogative of reaſon, the brute, according to the noble lord, ſhould ſeem to enjoy the happier portion †. This is not to humble human pride, but to debaſe human nature; and, man according to his lordſhip's picture of him, is the moſt deſpicable creature that ever came from the hands of his Maker: He deprives us of reaſon and revelation, of grace and glory, of God's preſent providence, and of his future favour, and then triumphs, (unhappy victor!) in the deſolation he has made over man, thus wretched, blind and naked. All this is natural: Having deprived himſelf, he could not, conſiſtently with his pride and principles, allow to others, the benefits and bleſſings of religion. If Lord Bolingbroke periſh, the human race muſt periſh with him, and nothing leſs than univerſal ruin muſt attend his fall.

Beſides, the principles of infidelity have a natural tendency to promote a malevolence of heart, as the principles

† See Letter to Lord Bathurſt.

of

of Chriſtianity naturally tend to advance peace on earth, and good will amongſt men. His lordſhip has acknowledged very clearly and fully this laſt, and muſt in conſequence admit the former, as the whole temper and ſpirit of his writings are a demonſtration of it. What complacency can dwell in that breaſt, which is barred againſt all converſe with the beſt of Beings? What triumph can ſwell his heart? Or what glory beam from that eye, which beholds a world without a God? What affection can flow from the philoſopher towards thoſe creatures, whom he conſiders, as diſtinguiſhed for folly and madneſs? Or how ſhould he love thoſe, whom God, according to his ſyſtem, muſt hate or deſpiſe, and who are, in reſpect of their duration, equal;—in point of reaſon, inferior to the beaſts of the field? The ſenſe of a life ſo baſe and wretched in its nature, and in its exiſtence ſo ſhort and uncertain;—of faculties impertinent in their uſe;—of a reaſon unreaſonable in its operations;—

of irregularities never to be rectified, and of misery never to be remedied;—of a world that was not made for man; of a God that has no relation to us, nor we to him;—of higher orders of Beings, amongst whom we shall never arise, and of an eternity which we must never inherit;—the one given as it were to mock our meanness, and the other to embitter our limited and transitory duration:—A sense, I say, of so much contradiction in our frame, and so much baseness in our nature—a sense of the imperfection of our faculties, the delusion of our hopes, and of the impertinence and vanity of our existence, must damp every joyous and kind affection, extinguish every spark of benevolence and good humour, render the gay, sensual and sottish, the avaritious, sordid and knavish, the sober, melancholy and desponding, and the proud, desperate. Expiring, yet hopeless, conscious of guilt, yet cut off from pardon, like rebels in arms against their prince, they must persecute all opposers with fire and sword, and build their significance

and

and ſecurity on the common deſtruction: — Their reſentment will be general againſt every loyal ſubject, though the weight of it will fall on the ſtouteſt defenders of their maſter's rights and honour. —— Hence we may eaſily account for the Lord Bolingbroke's treatment of believers in general, and for his particular acrimony and oppoſition to Paul and Moſes, to Tillotſon, Warburton, and Clarke.

I would ſay no more of his lordſhip's moral character; but only obſerve that we may from it, account for his rejection of Chriſtianity. It was impoſſible that he ſhould be a believer, with all his paſſions about him. The pride of wit, of genius, and eloquence, which he was fond to diſplay, could be never reconciled to Chriſtian humility, no more than the rancour he has betrayed, towards the general body of mankind, could be to Chriſtian charity. How, or why ſhould he love God, who denied his goodneſs and mercy? What faith could be expect-

ed from one, who reſolved to believe nothing, but what he ſees? What ſpiritual conviction, from the man, who denied all exiſtence of his own ſpirit? What effects or returns of prayer from him, who thought this duty no part of devotion? As far as the reaſonableneſs of the letter led him, he admitted, in words at leaſt, the reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity: But as he had no experience of its happy effects upon his ſoul and conſcience, he might, conſiſtently with his own doctrine, and the great principle of the Firſt Philoſophy, "That ſeeing is believing," deny theſe effects. How ſhould a ſelf-denying, an humble, and an holy Jeſus; —no naturaliſt, no patriot, no politician, no prince of this world—adorned with no arts, and poſſeſſed of no empire—but over himſelf;—how ſhould ſuch a teacher, meet with the eſteem, or merit the acceptance of a man, who had adopted Nature for the object of his knowledge, and the meaſure of his enjoyments; and whoſe life had been, for the moſt part, ſpent in the chace of pleaſure or power,

or in canvaſſing the meaſures of miniſters, and weighing the balance and intereſts of ſtates? The treaty of Utrecht, and the covenant of grace, were of ſo different a nature and complexion, that it would not be eaſy or agreeable for one, who had his thoughts engroſſed, as it were, by the former, to have any tolerable taſte for the latter. His lordſhip has done no more, than was done at the firſt riſe of Chriſtianity, when the wit, the learning, the policy, the power and prejudices of the world, were oppoſed to it: Nature and paſſion did in this caſe, what they will always do, fight againſt truth, virtue and piety.

The Jews rejected Chriſt, and were led to it, according to his lordſhip, by their own Prophets: But how were they led to it? Why, by a carnal interpretation of thoſe Prophets: And could any thing be more natural, than that a carnal people ſhould reject a ſpiritual Redeemer? The Meſſiah, to pleaſe his lordſhip, and the Jews, (whoſe patron he is upon occaſion, when it ſerves him to object to

Chriſtianity) ſhould have been a temporal prince, and a victorious leader, to deliver this people from the Romans, and not from their Sins: — Another Alexander, the ſon of Ammon, "to bind kings in "chains, and nobles in links of iron;" and then his lordſhip would have been a believer,

Thus much for the Philoſopher's moral character: — And the picture he has left of himſelf, in his poſthumous works, will, we preſume, diſcourage all imitation, and his practice, in a great meaſure, diſcredit his principles. For what man in his ſenſes, would chuſe to be lord Bolingbroke? —— would chooſe to be employed, a great part of his life, in the ſearch after other men's miſtakes, in expoſing their follies, in ſcurrility, falſehood and calumny? —— in maintaining his own alliance and fellowſhip with the brutes, in life and in death? —— in fighting againſt God, and his Providence; and in conſequence, indulging a ſpleen incurable, and a malignity of heart unconquerable? — in ſpitting his venom, and

and ſpreading, like a plague, darkneſs, diſtreſs, and death all around him?——

The Philoſopher's portrait, ſeen by itſelf and apart from others, though the colouring is high and ſplendid, has no beauty, no grace, or lovely proportion, to attract our admiration, or eſteem: But place over againſt, and in contraſt to it, the picture of the real Chriſtian, drawn from the genuine principles of the Goſpel, ſpirited without pride, and erect without ambition, humble without ſervility, and dauntleſs without ferocity, — with peace of conſcience and the peace of God, candour, complacency, and benevolence ſweetly beaming through the features — the heart of devotion opening Heaven in the countenance, — the eye of faith elevated, and with fond rapture and extatic gaze piercing the Heaven of Heavens, — the charm of love ſoftening, the ſpirit of God animating, and the light and glory of God irradiating the whole piece; — and we ſhrink back with horror at the malignant eye, the ſhameleſs front, the wanton leer, —— the diſ-

compoſed, the harſh and irregular features, — the proud and inſolent air, — the brow of ſcorn and contempt bent upon mankind, and the blaſphemous tongue directed againſt Heaven: — The whole encompaſſed with the miſhapen births of Chance and Chaos, —— the clouds and tempeſts of material Nature, and the ſhades of eternal Night.

SECTION VIII.

AFTER ſaying ſo much on the particular, or as I may call them, the ſpecific qualities of lord Bolingbroke, it may not ſeem difficult to ſettle, and ſum up his general character. — If any thing remains dubious in his conduct, it is that ambiguous and double part which he has acted as a man and a moraliſt.

Behold him now, or rather hear him declaiming againſt the corruption, the vices, and the venality of the age; like a preacher of righteouſneſs deſcending from Heaven, to ſave a ſinking land! See him ſtand forth the champion of liberty and virtue, ſacrificing himſelf, like another Decius, to the happineſs and ſalvation of his country, and devoting his life and labours, like a martyr, to his God! Such is his lordſhip's robe of ſtate, his patriotic garb, and the ſolemn form of his profeſſion, in which he appeared to his noble friends, and the public. But ſtep behind the ſcene; ſee him undreſſed,

undreſſed, and inveſted, if I may ſo ſpeak, with pure nature, and in his real and philoſophic character, and you ſee the mere mortal, "non hominem ſed homuncionem;" tranſported with the baſeſt, or however with the worſt paſſions of the baſeſt and worſt natures; chagrined with diſappointment, fired by reſentment, — elated by vanity, and ſpirited by ambition; — at liberty, upon his own principles, to purſue every groſſer impulſe, and to indulge every brutal inſtinct in his frame.

Thus he held a different language to his friends as a Patriot, and to poſterity as a Philoſopher. In this however he acted conſiſtently enough with his principles, careful, as it ſhould ſeem, of maintaining a character among his friends and countrymen, which was a perſonal good to him, while he remained in the land of the living; but careleſs of friends and country, and of every thing, except the reputation of his parts, which was his all, when friends and country, perſon

perſon and property, body and ſoul were, as he ſuppoſed, gone for ever.

We may judge of his lordſhip's moral taſte, from what he ſays in one of his Letters on Hiſtory, that he would exchange what we have of Livy, for what we have not: That is, he would rather have ſeen that broil of paſſion, that claſhing of intereſt and ambition, that corruption and vice, and that combination of political circumſtances, which undermined the foundation, haſtened on and attended the fall of Rome, than the portrait of thoſe ſhining virtues and heroic deeds, which had aſſerted and vindicated her liberty at home, and extended the glory of her arms and empire abroad.

As a man he ſeems to have had much of the compoſition of Alcibiades in his frame, — all his levity — his extravagance, — his artifice, his vanity and debauchery, and the ſame open contempt of the religion of his country. I wiſh I might not add, that Alcibiades, under the ſeverity of a Spartan, ſtill covered a licentious heart; and though his abilities

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as a politician, were indiſputable, yet his ambition was intolerable. I will not ſay, that his lordſhip will thank us for comparing him to any man of antient or modern times, but I think it poſſible he might mean Alcibiades no ill compliment, when he tells us, that Socrates could make him a great man, but not a good man.

In conſidering Lord Bolingbroke as a writer, we have endeavoured to do juſtice to his merit, in the beauty of his diction, and elegance of his compoſition, yet cannot think him altogether free from cenſure and defect in his manner. —He has, what he charges upon St. Paul, a great deal of that aſſuming air, which is apt to accompany much learning, or the opinion of it. He has the preſumption and artifice which he aſcribes to Des Cartes; — the groſs calumny and abuſive language, with which he charges the divines, and his political adverſaries, the journaliſts of the day. We allow him a fine pen, but then he had too much gall mixt with his ink: Or in other words,

he had a fine head, but a foul ſtomach, which prompted him to diſgorge on all that came in his way. He is the very bully he repreſents Dr. Clarke. He boaſts — he looks fierce, — and is little to be feared. — He has all the heat, — the hyperboles, the exaggerations, — the acrimony of ſtyle, and violent invectives, which he charges upon the rhetorical eſtabliſhers of artificial theology, who he tells us, declaimed much, reaſoned ill, and impoſed upon the imaginations of others, by the heat of their own. He has followed Dr. Tindal in all the chicane and ſophiſtry, which he has employed on the law and light of nature, and ſufficiency of human reaſon, but with more pride and power of genius, more oſtentation of learning, more compaſs of thought, and variety of obſervation: yet he has not more preciſion, conſiſtency, or connection: The doctor is ſomewhat more cloſe, more attentive, and guarded, and had not either the pride of genius, or of title, to ſupport him in ſuch daring paradoxes, — ſuch

avowed

avowed lewdneſs, and ſuch outrageous contempt of the laws, and religion of his country, and of the common ſentiments of mankind.

He has the copiouſneſs and elegance of Tully, but wants his accuracy, perſpicuity, coolneſs and good-humour. He has more fire than the Roman, with his comprehenſive range, — but wants his eaſe, his candour, his pleaſantry, ſerenity and judgment. He affects Bacon's extenſive ſcheme, and ſtately manner, but wants his depth, his reach, and ſevere majeſty. He has more dignity in his manner than Seneca, and a more juſt and copious eloquence: his periods are more rounded, more poliſhed, more flowing and harmonious, but he has not more wit and learning, more redundancy of thought, more variety of images and happy alluſions, in which to expreſs, to illuſtrate, and adorn his ſentiments: Seneca's errors, as a Philoſopher, were the faults of his ſect; lord Bolingbroke's ſeem to have been the vices of the man: He is not indeed ſo palpable a ſophiſt as

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the Stoic, but no leſs bold an aſſertor of paradoxes. If he is above that play of words which we cenſure in Seneca, he gives his intelligent reader more ſerious offence by his playing with reaſon and argument, and attempting to impoſe by all the arts of falſe logic, covered and conveyed under the brilliancy of a pompous diction, and all the figures of rhetorical declamation. He has not indeed the extravagance of the Stoic, but is without his elevation of thought, his temperance and ingenuity of ſpirit, his candour, his ſincere attachment to virtue and the moſt virtuous philoſophy, his deteſtation of vice, and ſenſibility of the excellence and true perfection of man. Our noble author has Plato's luxuriant imagination and flow of words, but wants his correctneſs and regularity, his lovelineſs, his moral character and divine ſublimity. Lord Bolingbroke's defects and enormities, as a reaſoner and a moraliſt, outweigh and overſhadow his excellencies, as a writer; but the defects of Plato, as a writer, (though no man

in general is more natural, more powerful and perſuaſive) are outweighed and overſhadowed by his excellencies, as a moraliſt. The ſober and modeſt reader, in attending our Britiſh Philoſopher, finds himſelf diſguſted at every ſtep, and tempted to lament, "O Lucifer, ſon of "the Morning, how art thou fallen from "Heaven!" But in taking his walk with the Athenian ſage, he finds the ſacred rapture warm upon his ſoul, and cries out, "O lovely Aſpaſia! Immor-"tal beauty! Aſpaſia! Aſpaſia! Vene-"rable Socrates! Lofty Timæus! All "charming Plato hail!"

What aggravates Lord Bolingbroke's unhappy conduct as a writer, is this, that no man has given better rules for reaſoning, and no man has practiſed them worſe. No man has exclaimed more againſt paſſion and prejudice, of which no man was ever more guilty. Who was ever a more ſevere critic? and who ever lay ſo open to cenſure? Who ever charged others, and was himſelf ſo chargeable with abſurdity and inconſiſtency?

ency? Who railed ſo much againſt dogmatiſm, and was himſelf ſo great a dogmatiſt? A profeſſed enemy to furious zeal and an uncharitable ſpirit, yet devoid himſelf of every ſentiment of candour and humanity: A ſpecious recommender of morality, yet fundamentally ſubverting every moral obligation: — Acknowledging the powerful and proper influence of religion, on the private and public happineſs of mankind, yet making it the buſineſs of his life and labours, to deface every principle of religion from the human mind; — applauding the excellency, and ſubverting, as far as he was well able, the authority of Chriſtianity; affecting to adore the wiſdom and goodneſs, yet attempting to deſtroy all government, and the very being of Providence; confeſſing the happineſs and advantage of immortal hopes, yet contending with the zeal of a martyr, for deſtruction and eternal death; reaſoning with the pride of a ſuperior ſpirit, and I had almoſt ſaid the faculties of an angel, to prove himſelf a brute; and whilſt he

affects to do honour to the nature and attributes of God againſt dogmatiſts and divines, has cancelled all the motives of reverence to his name, and of obedience to his authority.

However, we muſt allow, that Lord Bolingbroke has dignity, has eloquence, wit, memory, ſpirit and ſagacity in a very high degree. But if he has dignity, he has vanity; he has more eloquence than energy; his energy is ſometimes rage, and he has more ſpirit than ſtrength: His wit is unchaſtiſed and licentious: His memory is greater than his judgment—or his judgment is overborn by paſſion and prejudice, and his ſagacity appears more diſtinguiſhed than his ſincerity.—He is more a dogmatiſt than a reaſoner—more a wit than a ſage—an orator more than a philoſopher, and a politician more than a moraliſt. His genuine profeſſion was indeed politics:—His pride made him a philoſopher—and his manners an infidel. His converſation had influenced his principles, as theſe were foſtered by his pride; and

through both you will ſee his political ſagacity, buſy in deducing effects from their cauſes, and tracing the growing corruptions of Chriſtianity, through the ſucceſſive intrigues of Emperors and Popes.

In our noble philoſopher you obſerve not only the genius of the politician, but the form, the ſpirit, the tone, the ambition of the miniſter of ſtate, or more than the ſtateſman.—When Antoninus condeſcended to viſit the Portic, he brought not his quality and the imperial purple along with him, but ſhews himſelf in his ſpeculations every where decent, modeſt, compoſed, reſigned and humble. Lord Bolingbroke's quality gave him not confidence, but arrogance: the philoſopher appears ſtill in his robe of ſtate; you ſee him proudly ſeated, or ſeating himſelf on a throne; far above the level of the vulgar world, diſpenſing his dictates in literature, in criticiſm, in philoſophy and theology, with the tone of a maſter, or the haughtineſs of a tyrant, and pouring ſcorn and contempt

upon the learned of all ages, as no better than fools, knaves or madmen.

However on the ſubject of politics, we muſt allow, that addreſſing himſelf to his noble friends, and the public, he has preſerved more ſobriety, decency, and dignity, than in his other writings. —His wit, on other occaſions, and in general, is ſtrong rather than fine, and daring and raſh, rather than polite or delicate. It fears nothing, and ſpares nothing, however ſacred in the eſtimation of other men. It enters not the mind gently, and like light without noiſe, and with calmneſs and ſilence, but like a whirlwind, or a clap of thunder, which ſtartles and affrights you. It is ſhort and ſmart, rather than weighty, and has generally both the turn and conciſeneſs of an Epigram, after the manner and ſtyle of his favourite hiſtorian.—It is devoid of humour, pleaſantry, and delicacy, and conſiſts mainly in a magiſterial ſneer, a blunt, a frank and jolly rudeneſs, bordering upon, or

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of the ſame ſtamp with the bawdry of Montaigne, or a coarſe and unſavoury joke, by which he ſhocks the modeſt, diſtaſtes the elegant, offends the virtuous, and ſcandalizes the religious.—His lordſhip ſhews the man of quality, and his free ſpirit, ſuperior to vulgar prejudices, and unreſtrained by common modes, and the ordinary decencies of life. He has none of that ſtrange timidity, which he tells us from Mr. Coſt, that his maſter Locke was poſſeſſed of: For he takes not more liberty with the Koran, than with his Bible, and ſets on the ſame level Sabati Sævi, and the Bleſſed Jeſus.

On theſe occaſions he affects an unneceſſary frankneſs, and ſeems to pride himſelf, as diſplaying a ſuperior degree of wit and ſpirit, in proportion to the contempt, inſolence and outrage, with which he has treated perſons and things, which others held ſacred. In all former attacks upon revelation, ſince the times of Julian and Celſus, ſome reſpect has been paid, or at leaſt for form's ſake, ſome decency preſerved by the enemies

of the laws and religion of their country: We have had "Chriſtianity not founded "upon Argument," "Chriſtianity as "old as the Creation," and "Chriſti-"anity not myſterious;" — but Chriſtianity of ſome ſort, and in ſome ſhape or ſhew, was ſtill admitted: It was reſerved for the honour of the noble Philoſopher, though in direct contradiction to his own principles and profeſſions, on other occaſions, to attempt directly and openly the demolition, root and branch, of the beneficent religion of Jeſus.

Lord Bolingbroke was a genius and a wit: The different parts he ſuſtained of a ſtateſman and a ſcholar, of a politician and a philoſopher — the various branches of knowledge he attempted, and made ſo conſiderable a proficiency in, can leave us no room to doubt of his abilities; and it is more a wonder, that he performed ſo much, than that he underſtood no more in the literary way: His attempt at general knowledge led him, as it muſt do every man, into groſs ignorance, of

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particulars. As the traveller, who would, within the ſhort ſpace of human life, give us a perfect deſcription of all the parts of the world, their inhabitants, and various productions, muſt give but a very imperfect account of any: Where he has ſtaid the longeſt, and employed the greateſt induſtry and accuracy, there we may expect he will be beſt qualified for a teacher; and for this reaſon we juſtly prefer lord Bolingbroke's political, to his philoſophical writings. The politician preached well, becauſe he had been verſed in practice, and knew by experience, as well as theory, the principles of his ſcience. The philoſopher never practiſed, or his practice was ſuch, as led him into prejudices againſt the beſt philoſophy. He makes many a juſt obſervation on men and manners; for theſe, eſpecially of the worſt ſort, he had ſtudied. But religious truth and ſpiritual enjoyment ſeem to have been out of his province; and here he frequently cenſures what he does not underſtand,

ſtand, and condemns in the lump, what he had never experienced, or impartially examined. What contradicted his paſſions and prejudices, revolted his reaſon; and the real foundation of his mortal averſion to morality and religion, and of his preferring naturaliſm to both, was their excellency, which far tranſcended his conceptions, and were of a note too high for a corporeal philoſopher to reliſh; and what had no effect upon himſelf, he would not allow to have any exiſtence. — Experiment was the teſt of natural, and thence lord Bolingbroke's experience was made the teſt of moral and religious truth, which as he could neither ſee nor feel, he would not know or believe. He could find no appearance of conſiſtency in an author, who had publiſhed a "Commentary on the Epiſtles of St. Paul," and a treatiſe of the "Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity *:" The cauſe is obvious: he had pre-conceived an opinion of the inconſiſtency of the maſter

* Philoſophical Works, Vol. II. p. 132.

Chriſt

Chriſt and his Apoſtles. An inconſiſtency indeed there was, not in the notions or writings of either, which he does not ſo much as attempt to prove, but with his own prejudices and paſſions.

Yet religion, if it could not reform, ſerved to reproach him: Revenge was natural: he would diſcredit and deſtroy that, which, if admitted, would diſcredit and deſtroy him. Hence the Philoſopher's unrelenting malice againſt the Bible, in the room of which, he preſents the world with the Firſt Philoſophy: — But the remarkable difference between the ſacred writers and lord Bolingbroke, whom it is no injuſtice to claſs in the foremoſt rank of thoſe, whom we literally ſtyle Profane, will, I hope, ſtill preſerve the credit of the one, and repay with juſt contempt the other.

The more I read lord Bolingbroke, the more I find myſelf convinced of the futility of his reaſoning, the oſtentation of his learning, the vanity of his head, and the corruption of his heart. —— His falſehoods are ſometimes ſo bold and plain,

plain, that you admire his effrontery: — His paradoxes are ſo novel, that you ſmile at his vanity; — though his fraudulent chicane and ſophiſtry are ſometimes ſo palpable, that we cannot reſtrain our indignation and contempt for the man, who could ſo wilfully, or eaſily impoſe upon himſelf, and attempt ſo groſly to impoſe upon others.

In pretence he is modeſt, — in fact more confident and aſſuming, than any author he has cenſured: No man has affected more to humble human pride, — no man ever gave greater proofs of human vanity: — In words indeed he expreſſes a diffidence of himſelf, but he has at the ſame time ſhewn a thorough contempt of all mankind: — He profeſſes his zeal for truth, whereas he had plainly nothing ſo much in view, as victory; and he has diſplayed his learning, and extended his reading, as other conquerors have done their arms, with no other view, but to deck himſelf with the ſpoils of the vanquiſhed.

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His ſtyle and manner are his peculiar glory: it is here indeed he triumphs; he is generally elegant, ſplendid and happy in his diction; he may ſeem only too ambitious of ornament for a philoſopher, whoſe dreſs ſhould be his leaſt concern or recommendation: and after all the applauſe that has been given, or can be demanded to his excellencies, as a writer, it muſt be inſiſted upon, that he frequently dilates ſo much, that he is confuſed; —he explains till he is obſcure, — he repeats till he is odious, — he blackens till he is infamous, — he is inconſiſtent to the moſt palpable abſurdity, and pompous to a moſt ridiculous vanity.

In ſhort, more affected modeſty, —— more real aſſurance; — more ſhew of knowledge, more inſtances of ignorance; — more ſlender premiſes, more poſitive concluſions — more aſſumption and leſs proof — more declamation againſt fraud and impoſition, more real impoſture — more vehement invectives againſt prejudice, more glaring proofs of paſſion; — more eaſy credulity, more daring infidelity

lity — more pretence to preciſion and accuracy, more chicane and ſophiſtry; — more parade of argument, more inconſiſtency; — more affectation to defend God's laws, more real impiety; — more genius, more wit, more futility and folly, I never met with united in one writer, Pagan or Chriſtian.

This noble writer, I ſhould compare to ſome diſtinguiſhed ſtream, deriving from a copious native fountain, and receiving in its progreſs abundant ſupplies from Greece and Rome, from Egypt and India, and every other region waſte or cultivated, wholeſome or poiſonous in the known world: — ſmooth, rather than ſolid, it reflects not perfectly either ſun or ſtars, or any of the works of a righteous and gracious God: clear and tranſparent it delights the eye, though you are offended with the dirt and impurity of the bottom; ſtrong, though ſometimes raging, — majeſtic, though ſomewhat pompous, it fills and delights the ear; its taſte is grateful to the ſenſe, and refreſhing to the brutal order, — but the

the ſoul of man, who drinks it, dies: Sometimes flowing with becoming grandeur and graceful indignation, it breaks in pieces the ſubtle nets and artificial devices, raiſed at the expence of ages to confine its courſe, and obſtruct its paſſage, and with an irreſiſtible torrent ſweeps away at once, the tottering ruins of Gothic ſtructure, the ancient abodes of falſe zeal, and falſe knowledge, the cells of monks, and the portico's of ſchool-men, which ſerved only to croud the banks, and to obſcure the genuine and manly beauties of nature: — but ſometimes ſwelling beyond all reaſonable bounds, it ſaps the foundations ſet by nature: — At laſt, after a range large and irregular, polluting the ſhades of the learned, laying waſte and open the properties of all men, and deſolating the temples and altars of the Gods — after levelling with the ground every hope and production of nature, that aſpires towards Heaven, — after undermining all ancient boundaries, ſtrengthened by the

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ſucceſſive labours of the growing generations of men — after laying cities waſte and deſolating kingdoms, ſo that before it the earth is as the garden of God, and behind it, a dreary wilderneſs, it plunges itſelf with blind rage and ſullen fury, and is for ever loſt, in a gulph baneful and unfathomable.

SECTION IX.

LET no ſpeculative mind be troubled, or anxious, that ſo great a name, as lord Bolingbroke's, ſhould be enliſted on the roll of unbelievers: and let no good man be ſcandalized at the encomium we have given the noble writer. — Truth can never injure any cauſe, that has Truth for its foundation, nor bring real prejudice to any religion, that has God for its author. It ill becomes thoſe who charge others with prejudice, to appear themſelves poſſeſſed with it: — No: — let us, agreeable to our profeſſion, give tribute to whom tribute is due, and honour to whom honour. The genuine ſimplicity of our religion will beſt appear, by the ſincerity of its profeſſors: — And let every advantage, beſides that of truth, be ranged on the ſide of its oppoſers; its power in the conteſt will be more diſtinguiſhed, and its triumph more illuſtrious. — It will prove itſelf to be indeed the power of God, and the wiſ-

dom of God, when it rises superior to all the learning, all the arts and eloquence of man. — Learning, wisdom, the wisdom of the world; wit and oratory, all uniting their efforts, and forming under the banners of Christianity, had rendered its truth and divinity more suspected, or at least less apparent: — and had the Jewish doctors, and Pagan philosophers been its propagators, instead of the fishermen of Galilee; lord Bolingbroke had hence formed a better objection against it, than any he has yet published to the world. In this case, as generally in others, the Providence of God falls in with, and works by the nature of things. The very simplicity of the Gospel, and the humility and abasement of mind which it required, and other strange things which it brought to their ears, was sure to prejudice the learned sages, of both the Hebrew and of the Pagan schools against it: — and that a learned deist should reject it now, should no more raise our wonder, than that the Pharisee

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and Sadducee, the Stoic and the Epicurean did ſo of old; while the ſame principles and paſſions, the ſame ſelf-ſufficiency, lettered pride, or love of pleaſure influenced both in their enquiries. Beſides, there are reaſons peculiar to the preſent, as there were to the times of old, why men of learning and genius are permitted to oppoſe the faith. A religion that has been in long poſſeſſion, that is eſtabliſhed by the laws of the land, becomes as it were the cuſtom, as ſometimes it is little more than the cuſtom of the country. Peace in the religious, as in the civil world, corrupts our manners, renders us leſs grateful for the bleſſings we enjoy, leſs ſenſible of their value, and more ſecure and careleſs in the poſſeſſion, cultivation and improvement. Thus what was founded in divine revelation, at laſt reſts on mere human authority. What commenced in ſimplicity, degenerates into artifice: — What was delivered in ſpirit and power, is degraded into a name and a form: — A general languor enervates the ſprings of life; or if ſome

warmth is retained, a zeal exerted, and diſputes kept up, they are about the ceremonial and circumſtantials of religion, or perhaps for opinions and articles of faith, unknown to the firſt church of God; and which like ſupernumerary ornaments, have encumbered, ſupplanted, or diſgraced and deadened its native beauty and ſimplicity. Thus Divinity in proceſs of time becomes Theology, an art, like other arts, to live and thrive by; and Chriſtianity is to be ſought, if haply it may be found, in the midſt of Chriſtendom.

Look round on the faith, and the morals of the Chriſtian world in general, and of the Roman church in particular, and no apology need be made for the picture here given. Lord Bolingbroke ſaw, and took the advantage of this corruption of Chriſtians: — it is natural in ſuch a ſtate of things, to provoke the inſult of enemies: it is merciful in God to permit it. The lion out of the forest, or a wild boar out of the wood, may juſtly lay waſte, and devour that vine-

yard, which God hath planted for the beſt, and which we have trampled or ſurfeited on, have neglected, or cultivated perverſely and to the worſt ends. If any one then aſks, why God allows ſuch an atrocious author to inſult the truth; I preſume to give this among other reaſons; that there is a drowſy genius attending the peaceful condition of the church, as well as the ſtate: malignant humours ariſe in the moral, as in the natural world, from a calmneſs and indolence: A Bolingbroke is like a ſtorm to rouze, and diſpel the ſtagnant maſs, and to give new life and motion to the torpid members of a peaceful and ſecure eſtabliſhment. An enemy may be juſtly permitted to inſult the ſacred truths, which we grow careleſs to defend or to preſerve: and we ſhould remember with trembling, that the Chriſtians of the Grecian empire, had outlived their religion, before It and they were both given up to the barbarous invaſions of the Saracen and Turk.

Lord Bolingbroke—however enemy as he was, and formidable as he may appear, will in the event, whatever he may in the intention, prove a real, and a ſingular friend to the true intereſts of Chriſtianity. Like a ſtorm he may demoliſh what have been deemed by ſome the outworks, and what he would have thought the eſſentials of the Chriſtian church: while he will be found only to have ſwept away the foreign, and ſuperfluous ornaments, and to have cleared and more firmly ſettled the foundations. The Chriſtian clergy have here the faireſt field for the diſplay of their abilities, and learning, according to their ſeveral talents: for general defence would be like his lordſhip's general attack, could we meet with a defender of equal genius and capacity, without ſufficient preciſion and clearneſs, and would, I conceive, be a work too much for the life of any one man. Pagan, Jewiſh, and Chriſtian antiquity might be more accurately examined, and with a ſingle view to his lordſhip's objections: His fallacies might

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be detected, his miſtakes laid open, his malice made manifeſt, and ignorance expoſed; and new diſcoveries made to the advancement of the common faith. The learned critic has here the faireſt opportunity of vindicating the ſacred writings, from the partial repreſentations made by his lordſhip of facts, arguments and characters, in both the new and old Teſtament; and thereby of clearing them from many bold inſinuations given, and the concluſions drawn, or left to be drawn in prejudice to the faith. To this I will add, the ſacred critic might ſet in a fuller light, than I have yet ſeen it, the internal evidence of the authenticity of both the old and new Teſtament; by obſerving upon the ſtrong and genuine marks of nature, the paſſions and characters there deſcribed, beſides thoſe which are general and uniform through all ages and nations: He may point out a variety of topical circumſtances, as products and manners both in peace and war, in the civil, as well as in the religious ſociety,

peculiar to the early times, and eaſtern regions of the world, which may ſeem caſually, but are with the greateſt propriety referred to:—Above all, he might ſhew the divinity of the Law, and of the Goſpel, not only in the ſtriking ſignatures of divine wiſdom, in their conſtruction, and in their tendency to promote the perfection, the holineſs and happineſs of mankind, but alſo from the effects they had on thoſe who received, and on thoſe who rejected both; And the very hiſtory of Gentile oppoſition may be wrought up, into an irrefragable argument, for the truth of Chriſtianity.

The reaſoner would have a large, but an eaſy labour in unravelling the thread of chicane, and ſetting in full view the numerous inconſiſtencies, that run through his whole philoſophical works. It might be further ſhewn, how much his lordſhip has advanced without any proof;—how much upon preſumptive proof, and how much againſt poſitive proof, that may be produced to confute him;—how frequently

frequently he is inconſiſtent with reaſon, with antiquity, and with himſelf;—how many things he has alledged againſt revelation in general, and againſt Chriſtianity in particular, which make nothing againſt either; and what conceſſions he has made occaſionally, that may be applied to the ſupport and advantage of both. The triumph of faith on this occaſion will be the more diſtinguiſhed, as it will be gained over one, whom natural and acquired abilities have raiſed to ſo much eminence of fame, and who employed arms of every kind, who profeſſes to ſpeak without reſerve, and cannot be ſuſpected of concealing, or ſuppreſſing any thing, that might make, or ſeem to make for the cauſe of infidelity.

The reaſoner might further ſhew, from his lordſhip's repreſentation of things from the beginning of the world, and from his frequent expreſs acknowledgements, that the blindneſs, depravity, and miſery of man, is at leaſt as great in the ſtate of nature, as in the account of revelation;

relation; and consequently must equally reflect on the God of Nature, and the God of Moses: And it might fairly be demanded, whether a light clearer than that of Nature, to dispell this blindness—a law, stronger than that of Nature, to correct this depravity, and a support confessedly wanting in Nature, to remedy this misery, would not be more agreeable to our ideas of the supreme, all-perfect Being, than that he should leave mankind for ever, without hope or help, in the same state of misery, depravity and blindness. The bigot, the enthusiast, and the superstitious might hence learn, to distinguish between the word of God, and the inventions of men,—between revelation and tradition, and the text and comment; and to discard, as a disgrace to the divine dispensations, absurdities in opinion, and immoralities in practice, which give offence and grief to the wise, and triumph and insolence to the wicked; and which have no authority from faith or reason, but are in plain terms, or by

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the cleareſt deduction inconſiſtent with both.

Let then Chriſtians in general, of all denominations, and thoſe of the church of Rome in particular, abandon all ſuch rites, ceremonies, and opinions in theology, as muſt embaraſs them in the defence of God's true religion;—opinions, which contradicted by reaſon, can never be admitted under the ſanction of revelation—opinions, which muſt render the ſincerity of ſober men ſuſpected, and the faith of honeſt men ridiculous. And perhaps the beſt vindication of Chriſtianity againſt all its oppoſers, which it is in every man's power, as it is every man's duty to make, would be a life and converſation becoming the goſpel.

Hence it would manifeſt itſelf a very different diſpenſation, from what it appears in the noble lord's report and repreſentation. The religion of Jeſus, reduced to its firſt principles, and operating by its native ſpirit, enlightening the mind in reſpect to God and his moral attributes,

attributes, and the duties, we owe to him and each other; — purifying the heart, rectifying the will, reſtraining our paſſions, enlarging our charity, exalting our nature, enforcing every duty of private and public life, promoting our happineſs, and ſupporting us under pain and death, will maintain itſelf againſt all the learning, wit and eloquence, employed to defame it.

Religion, thus defended by the learned labours of ſome, and by the ſincere virtue, and ſplendid piety of all, who profeſs it, will owe its re-eſtabliſhment, if I may ſo ſpeak, to thoſe who intend its ruin, and a Bolingbroke, like a Julian, more ſtrongly recommend, by his oppoſition, the Saviour of mankind. And thus at laſt while the great philoſopher condemns, he will in fact vindicate the Goſpel, and in rejecting more recommend Chriſt Jeſus; and by giving new proofs in his own conduct, will appear to have more eſtabliſhed the truth and authenticity of the Chriſtian revelation: For

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all the causes, the effects, and consequences of infidelity described by Christ, were perhaps never more conspicuous, nor more completely verified, than in the conduct and writings of Lord Bolingbroke.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 57, l. 25, for *ſet*, read *ſit*.
P. 108, l. 5, for *previous*, read *precious*.
P. 135, l. 9, for *illuminations*, read *illuſtrations*.
P. 246, l. 18, for *fame*, read *frame*.
P. 284, l. 1, for *figure*, read *image*.
P. 292, l. 22, for *Strabo*, read *Strato*.
P. 308, l. 6, for *ariſe*, read *arrive*.
P. 330, l. 5, for *mortal*, read *immortal*.
P. 333, l. 13, for *odious*, read *tedious*.

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